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THE TRINITY.

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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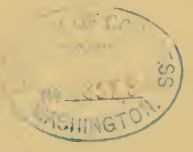

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is instructive to trace the history of such a doctrine as the divinity of Christ, and his relation to the Father, and see what different forms it has assumed at different times, and how the doctrine, as now received in the Christian church, has been built up, little by little, as the result of many controversies. Such an historic sketch may serve as a fitting introduction to the present volume.

The doctrine of the true and proper divinity of Christ, early in the history of the church, met with direct and earnest opposition. In the first century there were those who held that Christ was simply a man like other men, save that the divine wisdom was conferred on him more fully than on other men, and on this account he was called the Son of God, and was in a sense divine. This doctrine — essentially that of the modern Socinians and Unitarians — was held by the *Ebionites*, a sect of Jewish tendencies,

which arose near the close of the first century. Gibbon, Priestley, Baur, and others, have sought to find in this the original type of Christianity; but such is not the fact.

The Ebionites held that this divine illumination of Jesus took place at some time during his earthly life, previous to which special illumination he had no more of the divine element, no more wisdom, than other men. On the other hand, there were those, as *Theodotus* and his followers, and the disciples of *Artemon*, in the second century, who, while in common with the Ebionites rejecting the proper divinity of Jesus, maintained that he was from the very first of his life under the peculiar influence of the divine spirit, and that his conception was out of the usual course of nature. The scientific and skeptical spirit of the age was represented by the school of Artemon, who rejected as false or fabulous whatever passed the limits of the understanding.

Closely allied to these were the views of *Paul of Samosata*, bishop of Antioch in the third century, who seems to have rejected entirely the proper divinity of Christ.

But the church doctrine of the divinity of Christ found its most general, most permanent, and most dangerous opposition, in the doctrines and disciples of *Arius*, in the early part of the fourth century, and onward. The true humanity, not less than the true divinity of Jesus, was, in fact, denied by the Arians. They held that he was a created being, neither eternal nor self-existent, the first and chief of all created intelligence, existing as such before his incarnation, hence not properly a human soul, nor yet, in the highest sense, divine; though far exalted above all other created beings, and endowed by the Father with certain divine attributes.

Indeed, as we shall presently see, the views of many of the early church fathers, long prior to the time of Arius, were decidedly in this direction. They regarded the Son as a being not only numerically distinct from the Father, before the incarnation, but of *derived existence*, and in an important respect, therefore, *subordinate*. The Arianism of the fourth century is, in fact, but the matured result of views widely prevalent in the Christian church at a much earlier period.

Among those who recognized the great central truth of the divinity of Christ, there prevailed, almost from the first, widely divergent views. On the one hand, the *Monarchian*, or Patri-Passian view, which lost sight of the distinction between the Logos and the Father, and regarded the names Father and Son as only different modes of representing the same being, or different relations of the same being to our world. On the other hand, the view more generally held made prominent the distinction between the Father and the Logos, and even went so far as, in some instances, to represent the latter as God only in a secondary sense. Of the former class — Monarchian — were *Praxeas*, *Noetus*, and, with some modification, *Sabellius*, according to whom not the whole Deity, as the Monarchians generally held, but an efflux or emanation from Deity entered into and inspired the humanity of Christ. This emanation is the Logos, or Word. In like manner the Holy Spirit is an emanation from the unrevealed Deity. Thus, in the process of self-revelation, God becomes triune. In himself he is unity, and unrevealed. This self-expression of Deity is the ground of all existence,

and is likened to the emanation of a ray from the sun.

Of the other party of Trinitarians in the early church, making prominent the distinction between the Father and the Logos, the chief teachers were Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. *Justin Martyr* holds that the Logos was begotten in the beginning, before all creation, by the will of the Father. The distinction between the two is real, *numerical*, and not merely nominal; not merely as the light differs from the sun. As the words which man utters in speech detract nothing from his nature in substance, but leave these wholly unimpaired, so the generation of the divine Word leaves the divine nature wholly unimpaired. Another favorite figure of writers of this school, to illustrate the relation of the Son to the Father, was the emanation of a ray from the body or disk of the sun, which detracts nothing from its source. In common with other Christian teachers of the time, Justin Martyr does not regard the Logos as originally, and eternally, a distinct hypostasis from the Father, but as only the divine reason or intelligence in the Father, becoming

a separate substance or being only when God said, "Let there be light." Then the reason, previously dwelling as the thought in the divine mind, becomes a distinct rational being, the Son of the Father. The unity of the two is merely a unity of purpose, will, or sentiment.

The Logos, then, of Justin was neither a self-existent, independent, nor eternal being, nor is he one with God in any strict and proper sense, but numerically distinct. He comes forth from the Father, derives his being from him, and that in time, or at the creation of the world, and is Deity only in a subordinate sense. Similar were the views of Theophilus and Tatian.

Clement of Alexandria admits the separate existence or hypostasis of the Logos prior to the creation of the worlds, but as numerically distinct from the Father, and dependent on him as a derived being. He is the copy of the Father — θεός ἐκ θεοῦ — God from God — subordinate to the Father, though superior to men and angels. *Tertullian* seeks to hold both the distinction and the unity of the two. In his treatise against Praxeas he says: "Before all

things the Deity was alone; yet not alone, for he had with him that which he had in himself, namely, his *reason*"—meaning by this the Logos, or Word. This divine Word proceeds from the Deity, is derived from it, and a portion of it, as the stream from the fountain, or a ray of light from the sun. The unity of the two he compares to that of the root and the trunk of a tree, which are two things, yet conjoined; or the stream and the fountain, which are two, yet one. Still the Father, as the source of being, is other and greater than the Son, who proceeds from and is a portion of him.

The idea of personal distinction and subordination was carried yet further, or at least made more emphatic, by *Origen*, who uses the term Son in such a way as clearly to imply a derived existence, and gives definite shape to the incomprehensible dogma of eternal generation. The Son thus eternally begotten is not, as with Tertullian, the divine reason merely, or the word spoken, but a personal subsistence; not, however, self-subsistent, but of derived origin, not partaking the divine essence, which belongs to the Father alone, but another and secondary

nature. Hence he calls him θεός δεύτερος — a Deity of second rank. The unity of the two, with Origen, as with Justin and Clement, is harmony of will, agreement, society, a moral unity, as Paul and Apollos are one. The Son is not, however, a creation, or a created being, but begotten; and herein the writers now named differ from the Arians — a difference sometimes lost sight of by subsequent teachers, since we find Dionysius, pupil of Origen, representing the Son as the creation and work of the Father, as a ship is the work of the builder, and Gregory Thaumaturgus also calling him a creation — κτίσις.

These views finally culminated in Arianism. Indeed nothing is plainer, than that, as already said, the distinctive principle of Arianism — that is, the essential and original subordination of the Logos to the Father — was a doctrine prevalent in the Christian church long before the time of Arius; and that even in the long and bitter controversy which then arose, the absolute Deity of the Logos, in the modern Trinitarian sense, as equal with the Father, was not held by the church fathers, even of the Athanasian party. With all the zeal of that party against

Arianism, and in defense of the true and proper divinity of Christ, it neither held the doctrine of numerical unity of being or substance, nor yet the full equality of the Son with the Father. An essential difference between the two lies in fact upon the very face of the creed put forth by the Nicene Council. "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, seen and unseen; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father," etc. The *one God* then, of the Nicene creed, is the Father, and is clearly distinguished from the being subsequently named, the one Lord Jesus Christ. True, this Son of God is spoken of as a begotten and not a created being; in this respect the error of the Arians is fully met; but still a being distinct from the one God first named, derived from him, and subordinate to him — God from God, light from light — and not an independent and self-existent being. The Nicene fathers nowhere affirm, or imply the numerical unity of substance, or being, of the Son and the Father, nor the full equality of the former with the latter. When they call the Son ὁμοούσιος with the Father, they mean simply that

the two have a common nature, that they share the Godhead in common; not that he is self-existent, independent, or equal with the Father. This they not only nowhere affirm, but both by implication and express statement deny. The Father and Son are one as belonging to a common genus — individuals under a common class, namely that of Deity. This was the point specially in dispute with the Arians, who placed the Son, not in the rank of Deity, but in the class of created beings.

Professor Shedd, in his History of Doctrine, endeavors to show that the Nicene fathers maintained that the Son was derived from the Father, merely as to his *personality*, and not as to his *substance*, or *essence*. But Athanasius distinctly recognizes the οὐσια — being or essence — of the Son as distinct from that of the Father, and *derived from it* — γέννημα οὐσίας τοῦ πατρος. The one is an οὐσία γεννητός, the other an οὐσια ἀγεννητός. The Son, then, is derived from the Father as to his substance or essence, and not merely as to the distinction of personality.

Athanasius, in one passage at least, uses the term ὁμοούσιος as equivalent to ὁμοφυής, that which per-

tains to individuals of a common nature, or genus. In like manner *Gregory of Nazianzen* regards the persons of the Godhead as ὁμοούσιοι, in the same sense that Adam, Eve, and Seth are ὁμοούσιοι — that is, as possessing a common nature. Their unity is simply unity of purpose and operation. *Basil* the Great explains the word ὁμοούσιον, in the same manner, as denoting simply unity of rank, or the same dignity of nature with the Father, and says the word was chosen to express this idea. *Gregory of Nyssa* understands the same thing by it, and illustrates it by reference to Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, who, he says, were not three οὐσίαι — three natures or essences — but only one, and are called three men only by a figure of speech. Chrysostom uses the term quite in the Nicene fashion when he says, by way of illustrating the relation of the Son to the Father, that Adam and Eve were ὁμοούσιοι, and that children are ὁμοούσιοι with their parents, — that is, partake of the same nature, or belong to a common species. Indeed, Athanasius uses almost the same expression to illustrate the same thing. "We men, consisting of a body and a soul, are all of one

nature and essence — *μίας φύσεως καὶ οὐσίας* — but we are many persons." Are we then all *one man?*

Bishop Bull, in his defense of the Nicene creed, cites the fathers as maintaining that the Father is the fountain, origin and principium of the divinity which is in the Son; that he is *αἴτιος τοῦ υἱοῦ*, *author* of the Son, and *αἴτιον τοῦ εἶναι*, author of his being. Here, again, it is not of personality, as Shedd thinks, but of essence (*οὐσία*) and being (*το εἶναι*), that these fathers are speaking. It is the *divinity* of the Son that they derive from that of the Father as its origin and principium. "They all with one breath," says Bull, "taught that the divine nature and perfections belong to the Father and Son, not collaterally or coördinately, but *subordinately* — that is to say, that the Son has the same divine nature in common with the Father, but communicated by the Father."

The view of Augustine approximates more nearly to the Sabellian in making the work of the Son to be that really of the whole Trinity. He compares the distinction of persons in the Trinity to that of memory, intelligence, and will, in man. This makes

the most of the divine unity, while it reduces to a minimum the individuality of the persons.

It was not until the fifth, or possibly even the seventh century, that the doctrine of the Trinity received its most definite and positive form, in what is now known as the Athanasian creed — improperly so called,— whose statements, apparently contradictory, now asserting, and in the next breath retracting, and denying, are so worded, with utmost care, as to exclude the various erroneous opinions that might on either side arise. The key to its apparent contradictions — as when it affirms that the Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Spirit eternal; yet there are not three who are eternal, but only one — *non tres æterni, sed unus æternus* — is perhaps to be found in the fact already stated, that the Nicene fathers understood, by the unity of God, merely a generic unity, shared by several persons all belonging to the same rank or class; so that while each is God, there is still but one God; just as there are many who share the human nature, yet the human race is one.

There are certain metaphysical theories of the

Trinity, of a later date, which deserve a passing notice. From the first, there have been in the Christian church minds of a certain order, devout, learned, speculative, inclined to the Platonic methods of thought, who have sought by means of that philosophy to solve the highest problems of the Christian faith. The Logos of Plato is the eternal reason, dwelling ever in the Supreme Being, and essential to the very idea of God. From this, as starting point, the Platonic fathers deduced their Trinity in the following manner: The divine mind exerted upon itself, contemplating its own perfections, gives rise to the personal subsistence of the Son; and as the divine mind must eternally have been active, and have been eternally thus employed, it must have been from eternity giving rise to the personal existence of the Son. Among English divines Dr. *Horsley*, Dr. *Chauncey*, and others, have taken this view. Similar is the theory of *Melancthon*, and from the same source — that is, the Platonic philosophy. The Logos is God's thought, bearing his image, and receiving personality from him. In like manner, among the Germans *Olshausen* makes the Son to

be the self-consciousness of the Father, his knowledge of himself, so that the Father dwells in the Son; but as these faculties revert again to himself, this return gives rise to the third person, or the Holy Spirit. Professor Shedd, in his History of Doctrine, takes substantially the same view, in a note in which he attempts to illustrate the doctrine from the sphere of the human self-consciousness. The theory is essentially Platonic in spirit and Hegelian in form.

In the sixteenth century we find the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ brought again into prominence in the teaching of *Socinus*, who holds that Christ is by nature a mere man, but that since his resurrection all power is committed to him, as ruler of the universe. Hence he is properly called God, and is a proper object of worship. Indeed, Socinus would acknowledge no one to be a Christian who does not worship Christ. He is the Saviour of men, not merely by his teaching, but as priest and intercessor, and especially by his power exerted in their behalf as Lord and King.

The Sabellian view is very nearly reproduced in

the theory of *Swedenborg*, who holds that Christ is none other than Jehovah, the one only true God, assuming a material form and human body in the womb of Mary.

Then, again, comes up, if not indeed the Arian view, at least something closely approximating to it, in the theory of Doctor Watts, the Christian psalmist, who maintains the preëxistence of the human soul of Christ as the highest of all created souls. Becoming incarnate, it empties itself of this superiority, and assumes a human body. After the resurrection it becomes again what it was originally.

The *Pantheism*, so widely prevalent at the present day, rejects the true and proper divinity of Christ, by making a like divinity to be the common property of the race. The whole world is but the manifestation of God, and the God-man is the human race as a whole. The real incarnation is from eternity. Thus *Schelling*, in his earlier philosophy, and after him *Strauss*, deny that there was in Christ any special union of the divine and human elements, more than may be realized in others. Strauss affirms this union of the whole human race.

To this the view of *Schleiermacher* seems closely to approximate, if it be not, indeed, essentially the same. He holds that Christ was the ideal man, the type of the race. He had no preëxistence, but was a new creation. He is, however, God in the human form, man being the manifestation of God on the earth — his *modus existendi.* In other men he is but imperfectly developed, the God-consciousness being in them overpowered by the world-consciousness; while in Christ it predominated, and controlled his whole life. As thus ideally perfect he awakens the God-life in others. He is simple man, yet as the perfect type of humanity, he is divine; and of this divinity we may all partake by faith.

According to the view of *Dorner*, *Ebrard*, and other modern theologians of Germany, the divine Logos comes into the humanity of Jesus so completely, and so fully identifies himself with it, as not to have his own separate consciousness and will, nor yet the man his, but they are one — one *ego*, one consciousness, one will — all dualism of activity and consciousness being excluded. This would seem certainly to be at once the more simple and the

more sensible view, as regards the much-disputed question of the union of the two natures in Christ.

But we must not protract this discussion. We have sketched in brief outline, as was proposed, the chief historical opinions which have arisen, from time to time, in the Christian church, respecting the divinity of Christ, and his relation to the Father. They have been held and put forth, for the most part, by men of sincere and devout mind and earnest purpose, to whom truth was dear and the Christian faith sacred. Mistaken they may have been in their veiws — as some of them, indeed, must have been, where they so widely differ from each other — but it is not for us to sit in judgment on their motives, much less to repronounce on them the anathemas of the Athanasian creed.

One thing is evident from this survey of opinions. With all the thought bestowed upon it, and all the care of councils and the zeal of sectaries, the relation of the divine and human elements in the person of Christ has never been so clearly defined and established as to preclude the necessity of further thought and inquiry on the subject. The

Nicene creed, in its original form, was intended by the Council, which, after a long and bitter controversy, at last adopted it, as a final settlement of the whole question. It was to stand to all time as the ultimate decision of the Christian church on this difficult and much-vexed problem. It was to be a finality, — so it was intended, and so it was received by the emperor, the bishops, and the churches of Christendom. It was little less than a divine inspiration; it was to be the end of all controversy, — fixing the faith of the entire Christian world for all future time, unaltered and unalterable. So it did, indeed, for a time remain. The Council of Sardica decree that *no second creed shall ever appear!* The Council of Ephesus go further, and declare that whosoever shall compose any other creed shall be deposed from the ministry, if a clergyman, and excommunicated, if a layman! It is a somewhat interesting and instructive fact that, with the exception of one or two eastern sects, the entire Christian world, to-day, whenever it repeats the ancient formulary of its faith, called the Nicene creed, comes fully and directly under this ban of deposition and excommu-

nication, — for the Nicene creed, as now universally received and repeated, is not that drawn up at the Council of Nice, and pronounced a finality and the end of all controversy by the Council of Ephesus, but the form adopted and sanctioned by the Council of Chalcedon, in 451, in which certain very important omissions and alterations of the original were made. Nor is the formula of Chalcedon itself altogether a finality, as the multiplied and almost innumerable creeds of Christendom to-day attest.

As Dean Stanley well remarks, in respect to this matter: "Every time that the creed is recited, with its additions and omissions, it conveys to us the wholesome warning that our faith is not, of necessity, bound up with the literal text of creeds, or with the formal decrees of councils. It existed before the creed was drawn up; it is larger than the letter of any creed could circumscribe. The fact that the whole Christian world has altered the creed of Nicæa, and broken the decree of Ephesus, without ceasing to be catholic or Christian, is a decisive proof that common sense, after all, is the supreme

arbiter and corrective even of œcumenical councils." —(History of Eastern Church, p. 246.

No creed yet enunciated can claim to be a finality in this matter. There is still room for doubt, for conjecture, for earnest investigation. On a question of such moment to the world, it is perfectly idle to fall back upon the statements of the Nicene Council, or the carefully-adjusted self-contradictions of the so-called Athanasian Creed, and say, Here we rest; this is the end of all controversy and all question. Every sincere attempt of any candid, thoughtful, earnest mind to solve the problem, or cast light upon what is confessedly mysterious, is, on the contrary, to be welcomed as a step in the right direction, whether the views put forth accord with our own or not.

The work which follows is such an attempt, sincere and earnest, on the part of a devout and thoughtful mind, to cast light on a subject of acknowledged difficulty. The question discussed is one of momentous importance — essential, it may be called, to the right understanding of the Christian system; and, whatever may be thought of the particular views which the author maintains — some of which, indeed,

are not in accordance with the views of the present writer, — it is impossible not to give him credit for sincerity, ability, fairness, and thoroughness of discussion, and a truly Christian spirit.

The general view of the author may be thus summed up: He believes the Bible to teach, — 1. That there is but one God, the Father of all. 2. That Christ is the Son of God, begotten of the Virgin by the Holy Ghost; that in this Son, thus begotten, God dwelt — the *whole Deity*, and not merely the second person of the Trinity, as usually taught. 3. That the Holy Ghost, sustaining thus to Christ the relation of Father, is none other than God the Father; in other words, is the *spirit* of God, and no more a distinct person from him than the spirit of a man is a distinct person from the man himself. 4. That the Divine Trinity — the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — are not a trinity of persons, but the three essentials of one God in Christ, — the Father being Deity; the Son, the human nature in which Deity becomes incarnate; the Holy Ghost, God working in us through his Son, — a trinity first coming into existence when God be-

came incarnate in the person of Jesus. Such are, in brief, the main positions of the present work. It will be perceived, at once, how nearly they approach, in general direction, the views already stated as Monarchian, and also those of Swedenborg. If the work serve to awaken fresh interest, and prompt to new and diligent investigation, it will not be without good results.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION STATED.

WE believe that all Scripture is given by inspiration, and that whatever it teaches we should therefore receive as from heaven. If it reveals to us the one living and true God, and declares that beside him there is no other, we will believe it. If, while it teaches that "the Lord our God is one Lord," and that he is "God alone," it declares further, that there is in this unity a *Trinity*, or that there are three distinct persons, agents, or spirits, and that these three are one God; that they are all equal in power and wisdom, and that while each one of these persons is very and eternal God, the everlasting Jehovah, there are, nevertheless, not three Deities, but one Lord; however incomprehensible this may be, and however unreasonable and even absurd it may appear, we will not dispute it. If this is clearly the language of Inspiration, we should accept it as a fact, and here let the matter rest.

And, indeed, this is the position which Trinitarians have generally taken. They admit that they cannot understand it, and declare that it is a mystery which no one can explain. They believe it to be true, because they understand it to be the doctrine of the Bible. No one can comprehend how there can be three persons, each one of whom is supremely divine, and yet only one God; but then they say that there are a great many other things which are equally incomprehensible, and which we nevertheless know to be true. If we cannot understand some of the most ordinary operations of God in nature, it should not be thought strange that we cannot understand the doctrine of the Trinity. And if the Unitarian replies that he does not reject the doctrine because it is beyond his comprehension, or his power to reason, but because it is contrary to it; because the proposition that there are three and yet absolutely but one, is self-contradictory and absurd; the only answer the Trinitarian has ever been able to give is, that though it may seem to be contradictory, yet it is true, because God, as he believes, has declared it.

But the objector still demands whether we are to believe a certain thing to be true in reference to the Deity, which, if he had not revealed it, we would from the very nature of the mind which he has given us,

instantly reject as false. Can we, they ask, believe that "things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other," and at the same time admit that in some cases they are not equal? or that "the whole is equal to all its parts," and then declare that in some instances this is not true?

We could readily believe that the Father is God, and that the Son is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God, if we were willing to admit that the terms Father and Son and Holy Ghost were only different names given to the same person. But to assert that these are the names of different and distinct persons, and that they are all one God, and yet that each one is God, is to assert that three persons are one Being, and that each one of these persons is that *very same* Being. It would be declaring that a part is equal to the whole; that one, which is a part of three, is not only equal to it, but that one *is* three, and three are *one;* and that things which are equal to the same thing are that thing, and yet that they are not the same, but different. Again, when we say, as above, the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, we predicate of Father and Son and Holy Ghost, which are the subjects of these three propositions, the same identical Being, and then declare that the subjects are so many different persons.

If the predicates are the same God, according to the rules by which we reason in all other matters, the subjects must be the same person, or else some or all of the propositions are false.

If we assert that there are three persons in the Godhead, and that each one of these persons is singly, and by himself, perfect Deity, we are simply asserting that there are three Deities. We may confess with our lips but one, but we have distinctly in our minds, at the same time, three, and cannot possibly conceive of *such* a Trinity of persons, without admitting in our hearts a Trinity of Gods. Whatever we may say about his unity, our thoughts will contradict our words, so long as we believe in a plurality of persons, each one of whom we declare to be the Supreme Being. And when we bow to worship him, and say that he is God alone, we are yet, at the same time, thinking of three, and often embarrassed and in doubt which one we should address — sometimes appealing to God the Father as the one who is able to save us, at other times looking to God the Son as our only Saviour, and then, again, addressing ourselves exclusively to the Holy Spirit, and imploring of him pardon and salvation.

That there is this confusion in our minds, and that we do sometimes prefer one before the rest, and then,

feeling that we have been partial, address each of the others separately, will not be disputed. And, further, parents have experienced the same difficulty in trying to explain this doctrine to their children. They tell them that "there is but one God the Father," and that the Lord Jesus Christ is his Son, and yet that he, too, is God. Then the child affirms, immediately, that there are *two* Gods; and when it is told that beside these there is still another called God the Holy Ghost, it cannot possibly understand you to teach anything else than that there are three perfect and entire Deities.

This apparently most difficult question has engaged the attention of some of our best and most learned men in every age of the Christian church. Some have admitted the existence of three persons, but have denied their equality. Others, believing that the titles and the attributes of Deity were, in the Bible, ascribed to each one of these, and seeing no other way by which they could reconcile the matter in their own minds, have, very inconsistently, we think, and very much to the injury of the cause of Christianity, entirely rejected portions of God's Word as not of divine origin; while others, again, have accepted the doctrine, as it is now understood, with all its apparent inconsistencies and contradictions.

Now, we again assert, that if the Bible does teach this doctrine, Trinitarians are quite as consistent in accepting it as are those who, rather than believe the doctrine, would reject the truth of God. If there is no other alternative, let God be true, whatever may be the consequence. We regard it as settled that he is the author of the Bible, and that we should therefore accept whatever it teaches.

But are we sure that God has ever taught us this doctrine? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that we have misunderstood his teachings, than that he has commanded us to believe a thing which appears so unreasonable, and which, if any one else had said that it was true, we would feel compelled to reject as false? If, as we are told, reason is weak, and we are liable to err in our views of the consistency or inconsistency of the doctrines of revelation, might we not also be mistaken, sometimes, as to the doctrines which are taught in that revelation?

We think we shall be able to show that the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is now understood and explained, is nowhere taught in the Bible, but that in the different views which have been advanced upon this subject, are to be found parts of a great truth which God has revealed to us in his Holy Word. We hope to show, at least, that the view which we take,

while it will best reconcile the conflicting opinions which prevail now among men is, at the same time, the only one which will harmonize with the teachings of revelation, or to which it gives anything like a uniform testimony.

We believe the teachings of the Bible upon this subject to be:

1st. That there is but one God, the Father of us all.

2d. That Christ was God's Son. Not "God the Son," but as the Bible uniformly teaches, the *Son* of *God;* that in his Son Jesus, God dwelt, and through him he spake and worked; that it was not the incarnation of the second person in the Trinity, as we have been taught, but that in Christ "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Again, that he was not the Son of God, as any one else ever was. He was not formed from the dust of the earth, as was Adam, nor did he come into existence as any other member of the human family, but was *begotten of God.* Christ had no earthly father, but was conceived by the Holy Ghost. His mother was a virgin; the only virgin that ever became a mother. He was not God's Son through the medium of man, but was begotten directly and immediately from God himself; and as no

other one ever was; he is therefore called his "only begotten Son."

3d. That as the Son was conceived by the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost is his Father; and as the Deity is frequently declared to be the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," therefore, he that sustains to Christ the relation of Father and God *is* the Holy Ghost; and hence he is not a person distinct from God the Father, but is that very same person: in other words, the Holy Ghost is God's *Spirit*, and is no more a person distinct from him than is the spirit of a man a person distinct from the man himself.

4th. That there is a Divine Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; that these are not a Trinity of persons, but are the three essentials of one God in Christ; that by the Father we are to understand the Deity; by the Son, the human nature which the Deity assumed when he became incarnate; and by the Holy Ghost, God working *in us through his Son;* that hence in Christ is not only the humanity but also the Deity, and in him alone is this Divine Trinity. Finally, that this Trinity did not, therefore, exist until God became incarnate, and that this is the reason why it is never mentioned in the Old Testament Scriptures.

To show that these are the teachings of God's

Word will be our object in the following pages. If, upon a careful examination of the evidence, we find it to be the view which is set forth in the Bible, we should, of course, accept it as true. If, of all the different views which have been advanced, this should appear the most reasonable, and the one in favor of which there is the strongest Scripture testimony, we should give it that degree of consideration which the evidence and the importance of the subject would seem to demand.

This much we might say in advance, that the Bible does not anywhere teach that God had a Son which was begotten from eternity, nor that there existed from eternity a Trinity of persons, nor even that there is now in the Godhead such a Trinity. We have no evidence that the word *Trinity* was in use, or that the doctrine of three persons was ever taught by Christ or his apostles; nor was it taught by the church as a creed, until the fourth century. And we might state further, that the view which we have just taken, while it does not seem to contradict the teachings of Christ and his apostles, *does* most perfectly agree with that which is understood to be the apostles' teachings, and which is therefore called the apostles' creed. "I believe," it declares, "in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus

Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, and that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," etc. This does not say that he was God the Son, or that he was a Son begotten from eternity, but that he was begotten of the Holy Ghost in *time*, and was born of a virgin; and with this agree, as we shall see hereafter, the statements of Luke and other inspired writers. It sets forth that which we believe to be the true doctrine upon this subject, and at the same time contradicts that which the church teaches at the present day. For while the latter destroys the unity of the Godhead by dividing it into persons, each one of whom, singly, is God, the former leaves it undivided, and presents to us the one God of the Bible, who is from everlasting to everlasting, and beside whom there can be no other.

Those who have accepted the doctrine of three persons, and who have never had any difficulty in believing it — if any such can be found — we would not expect to be as much interested in the subject. But there are those who have tried to believe and *could not;* who, the more they have tried to reconcile the matter, the greater the difficulty they have experienced, and the more unreasonable it has appeared. Such persons may find it necessary to do that which others would not think of attempting. They may

feel compelled to go back to the "law and the testimony," to carefully reconsider the whole matter from the beginning, and to accept such conclusions only as this testimony will seem to warrant. They will consider, not that which is the general belief at this time, nor that which learned men have declared to be true in the past; but that which they believe, from an examination of the whole subject, is clearly the doctrine of revelation.

It is unfortunately true that many are more anxious to learn what the general opinion is than they are to ascertain whether that opinion is correct. They are more influenced by authority than they are by facts; and their views on nearly all subjects are derived from others rather than from an investigation of these subjects for themselves. We think we are correct in saying that not one in a hundred who now hold to the doctrine of three persons in one God ever came to this conclusion from a careful study of the Scriptures. Nor do we believe that those who have written in defense of this doctrine have ever called our attention to all, or even the most important part, of the evidence which the Bible has furnished bearing upon this subject. We do not know of any one who has taken the many statements of Christ and his apostles, together with the testimony which is to be found in

the Old Testament Scriptures, and drawn from this testimony, as a whole, such inferences as would necessarily seem to follow. But they have, on the contrary, generally taken those passages which are regarded as most favorable to their view, while they have only slightly noticed, and in many cases have entirely overlooked, some of the clearest and most positive declarations which were against them. Believing, as they did, that this was the doctrine of the Bible, and that its truth must be defended, they have searched the Scriptures, not so much for the purpose of determining whether this was the truth — because they have taken this for granted in advance — but that they might find such evidence as would prove it to the satisfaction of others.

Again, we have noticed that, in most cases, they have attempted to prove that it was true by proving the Divinity of Christ; as if to show that he was supremely Divine was the same as to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. But we expect to show, in the proper place, that the Deity which dwelt in Christ is not a person distinct from the one which is said to have sent him into the world, but was that *very same one;* and that the argument drawn from this fact has in it, therefore, no validity whatever; and that when this argument is taken away there is nothing left which

would lead us to a belief in the doctrine, however reasonable it might otherwise appear.

In this way we hope to vindicate the truth of God, and show that what he requires us to believe is not so unreasonable that many have been compelled to reject it as untrue, and so incomprehensible that all admit it can neither be understood nor explained. And whether we have made a careful survey of the whole field, or have taken an imperfect view of only a part, and whether our conclusions are such as the evidence, critically weighed, will warrant, we will leave the intelligent reader to judge. Believing that this is the truth, and believing that the truth will finally prevail, we are willing that what we here advance shall be submitted to this test—"If this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it."

CHAPTER II.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST.

"WE speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."[1] "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness."[2] "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."[3] If Christ came into the world, then, to bear testimony to the truth, we should be careful to ascertain what that testimony is. As he is the way, the truth, and the life, we should ever look to him as our guide, and receive with grateful hearts whatever he may see proper to reveal.

We think we can show from his testimony, that when he speaks of the Father, he means the Deity entire; and that by the Son, he means the human nature which the Deity assumed, and with which it is united, so that they are *one*, as he himself declares. As a proof of this we notice, first, that he calls God his Father, and that he also declares him to be our

[1] John 3 : 11. [2] Rev. 3 : 14. [3] John 18 : 37.

Father. He reveals to us the glorious truth that the Deity is the great Father of us all, and that we are to address him as our Father in heaven. He does not, anywhere, intimate that there are three persons in the Godhead, and that his Father is one of these persons, and that he is another; nor does he ever state that he is "God the Son;" but on the contrary, he expressly declares that he is *the Son* of God. He speaks of his Father as the great fountain of life and light, and, in addressing him, asserts that he is "the only true God."

Again, he tells us that the one who is his Father is also his God. "I ascend," said he, "to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."[1] "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[2] "My God . . . the name of my God . . . and the name of the city of my God."[3] If the Son, who here uses this language, is himself God, it is remarkably strange how he could have a Father. It is certainly a mystery the most incomprehensible, and, if true, would seem to contradict all our views of the Deity. But how much more unaccountable, when we affirm that there is one who sustains to him, not only the relation of Father, but also the relation of God; that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, is the Father of God the Son, the second person in the Trinity, and that

[1] John 20:17. [2] Matt. 27:46. [3] Rev. 3:12.

the first person is also the God of the second person; so that one Supreme Being is the God and Father of another Supreme Being, and yet that there is but one Lord. But strange as it is, and unaccountable as it may appear, if the doctrine of the Trinitarian is correct, we must either admit that it is true, or else reject the testimony of Christ. He not only declares that the Father is God, but he also most positively asserts that the Father is *his* God.

Trinitarians themselves admit that when the Son calls the Father his God, he is speaking of his human nature; and yet they contend that when he speaks of the Father as *his* Father, he does not mean simply the human son which was born of the Virgin Mary, but that he is talking about the Son who was born from eternity, and who, though begotten and born, is yet himself the Supreme God. But if they admit that he is speaking of his humanity when he calls the Deity his God, they must also admit that he is here speaking of his human nature when he calls the Deity his Father. For when he tells Mary that he is about to ascend to his Father and her Father, he declares in the same sentence, and with the same breath, that the one to whom he ascends is also his God and her God. We must either admit that by the Father he means the Deity entire, and by the Son the *man* in whom that

Deity dwells, or else be willing to concede that of two Supreme Beings, the one may be, and *is*, the God and Father of the other.

We notice, next, that the Father has sent the Son into the world, and that he is ever present with him. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."[1] "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world."[2] "He that sent me is with me."[3] "The Father hath not left me alone."[4] "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me."[5] "The Father that dwelleth in me."[6] "I am in the Father, and the Father in me."[7] "I proceeded forth and came from God."[8] "I came forth from the Father."[9] "Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world." "Him hath God the Father sealed."[10]

Here, again, it is evident that by the Father he means the Deity, or Godhead entire, and that he regards it as *one* and indivisible. God sent him into the world, and his Father sent him. He proceeded and came forth from God, and he came forth from the Father. In all these passages, he uses the terms Father and God as synonymous; nor do we believe that a place can be found in the Bible where he uses them in a different sense. He does not say that the

[1] John 3:16. [2] 3:17. [3] Jo. 8:29. [4] Same. [5] Jo. 8:16. [6] Jo. 14:10. [7] 14:11. [8] Jo. 8:42. [9] Jo. 16:28. [10] Jo. 10:36. Jo. 6:27.

Son is God, or that, without destroying the unity of the Godhead, you can divide it into three persons, each one of whom is God; but on the contrary, he declares that the Father is the *only* true God, and that he dwells in his Son.

But if God is his Father, and is ever present with him, have we any evidence that there dwelt in Christ any other divine person? Are the works which he performed, and the doctrine which he delivered to men, ascribed to the Father alone, or are they sometimes ascribed to others?

That the Deity dwelt in Christ, and that there was in him a mysterious union of the human and the divine, cannot be disputed. But the question is, whether the Father is that Divine Being, or only one person of it; whether beside him there is another person called God the Son, who is equal with the Father; and that he is the one who became incarnate, and who performed, in whole or in part, the works of Deity. And for the answer we will again appeal to the testimony of Christ. "I can of mine own self do nothing."[1] "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do."[2] "I do nothing of myself."[3] "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."[4]

While the Son, then, does the works of God, it is

[1] John 5:30. [2] 5:19. [3] Jo. 8:28. [4] Jo. 14:10.

because of the presence of the Father. The Son performs the works, but the power by which he does them he attributes to the Father alone. God the Father dwells in him, and works through him. Without him he can do nothing. It was the Father who gave him the work, and then gives him the power to do it; and while all things are in the hands of the Son, it is, to use his own language, because "all things are delivered unto me of my Father."

And here we find that Trinitarians have failed to make a very important distinction. They speak of the works of the Son as if they were his own, and refer us to the place where he declares (John 5:17)—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And again (verse 19): "For what things soever he [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." And again (verse 21): "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." But if the Son can do nothing of himself—if the Father that dwells in him does the works, and if the power which the Son has in heaven and in earth is *given* to him, as he expressly declares it is (Matt. 28:18),—then he is not speaking of works which he performs independently of the Father, but of the works which the Father dwelling in him is performing through him. And, indeed, this would seem

to be his meaning in this very place; for he tells us plainly that the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do (John 5:19); and then tells us that because "the Father loveth the Son," he "showeth him all things that himself doeth," and that he will show him even greater things (verse 20); and, finally, after telling what some of these things are, he declares that the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (verse 22); and that "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (verses 26, 27). The Son not only asserts here that his life is given to him by the Father, but also the authority which he has to execute judgment, and that the reason why he has this authority is not because he is God, but because he is the *Son of man.* Of what avail is it then, to assert that the Son is God, because he did the works of God, when he tells us that he can do nothing of himself, and most solemnly declares, "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works"?

We notice, next, the one from whom the Son received his doctrine. He has revealed to us truths on the most important questions that can engage the attention of man. Were these his own, or did he

receive them from the Father? He has answered this question in language which cannot be misunderstood. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."[1] "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him."[2] "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."[3] "I speak that which I have seen with my Father."[4] "A man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God."[5] "As I hear, I judge."[6] "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself."[7] "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me."[8] "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you."[9]

Here, again, it is evident that he uses the terms Father and God as synonymous, and that he speaks of the Son as the one through whom God revealed his truth to man. This doctrine he received from God his Father. It did not come originally from him, but God revealed it to him; or, as he expresses it, he was taught these things by his Father. Then if this doctrine *did* come originally from God, but did *not* come originally from his Son, is the Son God? If we say that he is, it is certainly clear that we deny some of the plainest and most positive declarations of our Lord.

But if God the Father does the works, and is the one

[1] John 7 : 16. [2] Jo. 8 : 26. [3] 8 : 28. [4] 8 : 38. [5] 8 : 40. [6] Jo. 5 : 30. [7] Jo. 14 : 10. [8] Jo. 17 : 8. [9] Jo. 15 : 15.

from whom the Son received his doctrine; from whom does he also derive his life? Does the Son have this life in himself, or did he receive it from the Father? We have already glanced at this, but wish to notice it here a little farther. The answer of Christ is this: "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."[1] "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."[2] "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."[3] In looking at these passages, we should mark two things distinctly. 1st. That the life which the Son had was given to him. 2d. The life also which he gave to others. The Father hath *given* to the Son to have life; and as he lives by the Father, so we live by him. The Son gives eternal life to as many as his Father has given him, because his Father has given him power over all flesh. "He that hath the Son hath life," because the Father has given him to be the life of the world.

But if the Son is the everlasting God, could he have his life given to him? Can he who was from eternity be said to depend upon another for his exist-

[1] John 5:25, 26. [2] Jo. 6:57. [3] Jo. 17:2.

ence, and to have derived from him the power which he has over all flesh, and the life which he gives to the world? Are these the exalted views which the Scriptures give us of the Deity? And is this "the living God" who is self-existent and independent, and of whom it is said that he "only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto?" And, further, if the Son can have his life from the Father, and yet be equal with him, why does he not say that as he lives by the Father, so does the Father live by him; that as the Son has life in himself, so has he given to the Father to have life in himself; and that the Son has given to the Father power over all flesh, and that all things are delivered into the hands of the Father by the Son? If they can each be dependent upon the other, and yet there be but one Supreme Being, and that one, too, independent and eternal, why is the Son alone represented as being dependent upon the Father, and the Father as depending upon none?

But, leaving this, we wish to call attention to another point in the testimony of Christ, which, in the discussion of this question is certainly of the first importance. In speaking of the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, and of the calamities which should befall the inhabitants of the city and nation, he tells his disciples (Matt. 24:36)—"But of that day and hour knoweth

no man, no, not the angels of heaven, *but my Father only*." Mark, in speaking of the same event, gives this as his language: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father." (Mark 13:32)

If our Saviour did use these words, it is certain there was one thing which the Son did not know. It is certain that there was one thing which was not known to any except the Father. This much would at least follow, whether we take his statement as recorded by Matthew, or by Mark. Matthew tells us that the time is known to the Father *only;* while Mark states that it is not known to men or angels, *neither the Son*, but the Father. The genuineness of these passages has never, we believe, been questioned, and Trinitarians have had no little difficulty in trying to explain them. The truth is, there can be no construction put upon them which can be reconciled with the doctrine that the Son is God, begotten from eternity, and this some of their ablest writers most frankly admit. And unless we accept his own statements when he tells us: "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things;" and again, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father:" or, still more explicitly, "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you;" "A man that hath told you

the truth which I have heard of God"—unless we accept these, and other similar declarations, in which he speaks of himself as revealing the things which the indwelling Father had revealed to him, and then admit that here was *one* thing which the Son did not know, because the Father had not told him, we must either reject his testimony, or else deny the omniscience of God.

There would be no difficulty in explaining these passages, if we were willing to admit that by *the Son* is meant the humanity of our Lord, and by *the Father* the Deity; since there might be many things which God the Father had not revealed to his Son. And, indeed, that the Son should know all things, on this supposition, would be impossible. Whereas to assert that the Son is himself God, and yet *did not know*, would be an absurdity, as it seems to us, which is only equaled by the assertion that there are three persons, each one of whom is supremely divine, and yet only one Supreme Being. So long as we acknowledge these to be the words of Christ, so long we must admit that there was one thing, at least, which the Son did not know, and hence that he was not equal with the Father.

But if this is what he teaches in this place, does he in any other place use language which would seem to

lead us to a different conclusion? Does the Son ever claim, anywhere, an absolute equality with the Father? If he ever did, we very frankly acknowledge that we do not know where it is. If he ever taught that he was God, or that he was equal with the Father, we have never been able to find it; but, on the contrary, he expressly declares: "My Father is greater than I." Trinitarians say that he is here speaking of himself as the envoy or messenger of God; and that in this sense the Father might be regarded as greater than the Son. But will these words bear that construction? and can it in any sense be affirmed that there is one greater than the Supreme God? If the Son was sent into the world by his Father; if his Father delivered all things into his hands — gave him the kingdom over which he rules, gave him power over all flesh, gave him all the power which the Son has, gave him even the words which he was to speak, and the life which he was to bestow — does not this prove, conclusively, that the Father is, as the Son declared, greater than the Son? Is not he who had the power and the authority from eternity, greater than the one to whom he gave it? And if the Father had this power and this life in himself, and the Son did not have it, only as he received it from the Father; is not the Father greater than the Son?

We might call attention to a number of other passages, in which Christ proclaims the same doctrine that we have found him teaching all along, viz., that the Father is God, and that what the Son has, his Father has given to him. But we do not deem it necessary. We have already gone through the greater portion of his testimony, touching this question, and have found that the only Deity, or divine person, of which he has spoken, thus far, is the Father; and that if there is any other one dwelling in him, he has not yet intimated it. We have seen: 1st. That he calls the Deity his Father. 2d. That he declares him to be his God. 3d. That he testifies of God his Father, that he has sent him into the world. 4th. That his Father is ever present with him, and dwells in him. 5th. That the Son can do nothing of himself, but that the Father who dwells in him, "he doeth the works." 6th. That the doctrine which he came to teach was not his own, but had been taught him by his Father. 7th. That even for his life, he was dependent upon him who, alone, had life in himself, and whom he therefore terms the "living Father." 8th. That while the Father revealed to the Son all things that were necessary for him to know, there were *some things* which he had not made known to him, and that these were known to the Father only. 9th. The Father is

greater than the Son. 10th. That the power and authority which the Son has, either in heaven or upon earth, is not his own, but has been given to him by the same *everlasting Father*, from whom he has received all things, and upon whom all beings are alike dependent.

In the establishment of these points we have not had any difficulty in reconciling the different statements of Christ, because they appeared contradictory, but have had a uniform testimony. He has not said that God was his Father, and then again that he was not; neither has he testified that the Father dwelt *in* him, and worked *through* him, and then, again, that some other divine person had done these things. But he has, invariably, ascribed all that he has, and all that he does, to God the Father. His Father sent him, and he came. He revealed to the Son his truth, and the Son revealed it to men, and revealed to them the Father.

And now we wish to examine some passages where it is claimed that Christ teaches the supreme divinity of the Son. If he ever did use language which would lead us to this conclusion, it would certainly seem to contradict what he has most clearly taught us so far, and should therefore receive very special attention.

It is thought that the Son is God because he receives

divine honors. He permitted the disciples and others to worship him. He said that "all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." We admit it; and if this is evidence that the Son is himself God, we must concede the fact, though we may not be able to comprehend it. But was it the humanity of Christ which they worshiped, or was it the Deity which dwelt in that humanity? And if it was the Deity, why not say it was the Father? Have we not seen that he dwelt in Christ? and is he not divine? Surely Christ has not spoken of any other person as dwelling in him who *was* God; and if this be true, it would seem that we not only may, but *must* conclude that the one which they worshiped was the Father. Our Saviour has told us that the Father is God, and has said that we should worship him. "The hour cometh," said he, "when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." And again, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." And then, to show that by the Father he means the Godhead entire, he adds: "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." To argue that the Son is God because of these acts of divine worship, is like learned men writing

volumes, to prove his divinity, from the works which he performed, when, according to his own testimony, these works were not his, but the Father's that dwelt in him. To be consistent, should we not say, that, as the Father, who dwelt in Christ, did the works, so, too, he was the one in him who was worshiped?

They approached the Son in order to worship the Father, because Christ has taught that no man *can* come to the Father except by the Son. In the Son dwelt an *undivided* Deity. In him, and with him, is the Lord God our Redeemer; and beside him, as the Bible everywhere teaches, there is no Saviour. In him dwelt not only "all the fullness of the Godhead," but in him alone is the Divine Trinity of Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is the Deity; the only divine person of which the Son has ever spoken. He is not only our Father and our God, but is also "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And while he is God alone, he has a Son, who was begotten by him, and was born of a woman; and this son is the man in whom the Father dwelt, and with whom he is so united, that, as Christ himself declares, he and the Father are one. The son is so in the Father, and the Father in him, that he that has seen the Son, has seen the Father. But no one has ever seen the Father, except through the Son, or ever can see him. No one

has seen his shape, or heard his voice (John 5:37); and because God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire, he therefore tells Moses that no one can see his face and live. And as the Father can be seen only through the Son, or in him, so neither is there any other way by which he can be approached and worshiped. In other words, we come to the Father, and commune with him, through the Son; as we converse with the soul of a man through his body. We cannot see his soul, except in his face, nor can we speak to it. We cannot see its form, nor hear its voice; nor can we approach to it except through the body, which is a kind of living *logos* to the soul, in a similar way as, in Christ, the Son is to the Father. Hence we read that the Son is "the way," and "the door," and that "no man cometh unto the Father but by me;" and other similar expressions.

But if it still be said that the Son does himself receive great honors, and that he is a being most highly exalted, we will very frankly admit it, and will say that it is because of his union with the Father. We read that "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus

Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." We believe that the Son does occupy this very exalted position, and that while it proves the great honor which has been conferred upon him, it is also proof conclusive that he is not himself God. For if he was, he could not be exalted by another; neither could he have a name given to him. The awful name of the Deity is above every name in the universe, and was from eternity; and there can be no greater Being who is able to exalt him. And, beside, let it be remembered, that God is the one who is here said to have exalted his Son, showing that the Son is not God; and, further, that while every knee bows, and every tongue confesses to the Son, it is distinctly stated that this is done to the glory of God the Father. And, hence, when Christ tells us that all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father, he immediately adds: "He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." And, hence, he tells us again: "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." By which he means that in receiving the Son, they receive the Father, and that in honoring him, they do thereby honor the Father who dwells in him, and who has exalted him "with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour." But more on this point when we come to the testimony of Paul.

It is claimed again that the Son is God because he is represented as being invested with the attributes of Deity. He knew, it is said, what was in the heart of man, which proves his omniscience. His mighty works and words are referred to as evidences of his omnipotence. He tells his disciples that he will be with them always, and that wherever two or three are assembled in his name, he will be there to bless them, which proves his omnipresence. As to the first, his omniscience, — before they can establish this point it will be necessary to show two things: 1st. That the knowledge which the Son had was his own; and 2d. That he knew *all things*. But we have already seen that there was *one* thing which he did *not* know. And how he came in possession of that which he *did* know, we have only to refer again to what he has himself taught us. We have seen that his doctrine was not his, but the Father's that sent him; that all things which his Father had revealed to him he had made known unto his disciples; that he had given them the words which had been given him; had spoken these things as his Father taught him, and was a man who had told them the truth which he had heard of God. He does not claim to have any knowledge which was not derived from the Father.

And is it anything strange that he should seem to

have unlimited power, when he was armed with the strength of his Father and his God? Has he not told us, over and over, that this power was given to him, and that he could do nothing of himself? And if the Son derived this power and this knowledge from another, and that one is declared to be the Father, why need we insist, contrary to the evidence, that the Son is also God, and equal with the Father? Can two Deities, or two persons, equally divine, do more than one? And if the Son only speaks of *one*, and testifies that from him he has received all things, why should we conclude that there are two?

The promise which the Saviour made, that he would always be with his people, we will speak of in another chapter.

The Son declares that he will judge the world. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Therefore it is argued that the Son is God. To know the secrets of all hearts, and to reward every man according to his deeds, is the work of an infinitely wise Being. On this important point let us once more refer to the words of Christ: "The Father," he says, "judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son . . . And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." (John 5:22, 27). "I can of mine own self

do nothing; as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (verse 30). The authority which he has to execute judgment, then, is given to him by the Father; and the reason why he has committed this judgment unto the Son is because he is the *Son of man.*

Again, this judgment which he pronounces is not his own, but is what he has *heard.* He can do nothing of himself, but as he *hears*, he *judges;* and his judgment is just, not because he is God, but because he is submissive to the will of God. God, then, who in this world worked and revealed himself to men *through* his Son, will, on that solemn day, judge them *by* him; or, as Paul expresses it, "he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that man* whom he hath ordained."

There are a few other passages from which some have inferred the separate divinity of the Son, but we shall not notice them at present. We have already examined nearly all that Christ has said directly upon this important subject; and those passages which we have only partially considered, or have passed over in silence, will receive due attention at the proper place.

From the examination made, it is evident that by the Father, Christ means the Deity. There certainly

is not a place in his testimony, or in the Bible, where by the Father is not meant the everlasting Jehovah. To this we do not think that any one will take exception. Nor is there a place where Christ ever taught that there is a Son who was born from eternity, or that there are three persons in one God, or that such a division of the Deity is possible. On the contrary, he asserts the truth of the first and great commandment, that "the Lord our God is *one* Lord," while to the young man who calls him good Master, he replies, "there is none good but *one*, that is God."

But if he never destroyed the unity of the Godhead by dividing it into persons, each one of whom is perfect Deity; and if, as we shall see hereafter, no other inspired writer ever did, then why should we believe that such a doctrine is true? If the Bible does not declare it, and if the Christian church never taught it until it became corrupted, why should we teach it? The doctrine of a Son by "eternal generation," and of a Trinity of persons from eternity, was not received and taught as the faith of the church until the fourth century; and that the church had already lost its purity and its spiritual power, and that it did, from that time, become more and more corrupt, is a fact in history known to all. Nor has it to-day the power which it once had, nor will it ever have

again until it acknowledges and worships one God instead of three.

Christ has said that the Father was God; but he never said that any one else was. He tells us that the Son is a *man*, and he calls him the *Son of man*, and also the *Son of God;* but he never said that the Son himself was God. And we agree with Doctor Adam Clark, that the doctrine of the eternal sonship of Christ is a self-contradiction, and one of the greatest absurdities that the Christian church ever taught.

This learned commentator, speaking of this subject, in his note on Luke 1:35, says: "I reject this doctrine for the following reasons: 1st. I have not been able to find any express declarations in the Scriptures concerning it. 2d. If Christ be the Son of God, as to his divine nature, then he cannot be eternal; for Son implies a Father; and Father implies, in reference to Son, precedency in *time*, if not in *nature*, too. Father and Son imply the idea of generation; and generation implies a time in which it was effected, and time also antecedent to such generation. 3d. If Christ be the Son of God as to his divine nature, then the *Father* is of necessity *prior*, consequently *superior* to him. 4th. Again, if this divine nature were begotten of the Father, then it must be in time; *i. e.*, there was a period in which it *did not* exist, and a period

when it *began* to exist. This destroys the eternity of our blessed Lord, and robs him at once of his Godhead. 5th. To say that he was begotten from all eternity is, in my opinion, absurd; and the phrase *eternal Son is a self-contradiction. Eternity* is that which had no beginning, nor stands in reference to *time*. Son supposes *time*, *generation*, and a *father;* and time also antecedent to such generation. Therefore the conjunction of these two terms, *Son* and *eternity*, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and opposite ideas." (Clark's Com., vol. 5, p. 361.)

From this it will be seen that Doctor Clark, though he believed in a Trinity of persons, did not believe in the eternal Sonship of our Lord; nor do we believe that his arguments on this subject have ever been answered, or ever can be. And if it is absurd to say that the Deity in Christ was a Son born from eternity, is it not equally absurd to say that this divine nature was again born of a woman? That God the Son, who was begotten by the Father from eternity, and who, though begotten, was yet equal with him, was after this begotten again in *time*, and was born of Mary? Is it not, in fact, a monstrous doctrine to say that the Deity can be born of any one? If he can be, or if one person of the Deity can be born

of another person, then God is not the *one*, *undivided*, *self-existent*, *independent* and *eternal* Being which we have taught that he is, and which the Scriptures declare him to be; nor is that part or person which was begotten and born, equal to the one by whom it was begotten. If we say that the one born is *not* equal, we deny his divinity; and if we contend that, though dependent, he is yet equal, we must bury forever our reason, and, at the same time, reject the teachings of the Bible.

Further, if we say that the Father is God, and that the Son is God, and that the one was begotten by the other, we either assert that the Son was begotten by *himself*, and is *his own* Father, and that the Father is *his own* Son; or else we believe in a plurality of Gods, and that one is inferior and subordinate to the other. For Christ has not only taught that the Son is dependent upon the Father, but that he is also in subjection to him. The Father commands, and the Son obeys. He is a man of sorrows doing the will of the Father, pleading with him earnestly in prayer, and obedient even unto death. The Father loves him because he keeps his commandments, and is ever submissive to his will; and lest it might be said that the subjection of the Son to the Father was only during the days of his humiliation on earth, the

Scriptures teach (1 Cor. 15 : 28) that it will be eternal.

Then if the Son is God, we must admit that there are at least *two* Deities, and that one is subordinate to the other. But if we say that the Son is a man, and that, while the Father is the divinity of our Lord, the Son is his humanity, then we have but *one* God, who is the Father of us all, and one Lord Jesus Christ, in whom, as the church teaches, there are two perfect natures — perfect God and perfect man. Whereas, on the supposition of three persons, only one of whom became incarnate, there is in Christ only a part of the Deity. He would have in him the whole nature of man, and only a *part* of the nature of God; or else he is a man in whom dwells only one of *three* Deities. And if this is unreasonable, as it is unscriptural, why should we believe it? Why not accept the testimony of Christ, and say that the Father is God, and that the Son, who labors and learns, prays and obeys, and suffers and dies, is the *man* in whom the Father dwells? Why insist that the Deity in Christ was the Son, when he declares it to be the Father, and has never spoken of any one else? To claim that there are two when he only speaks of one, and when all, in fact, agree that there *is* but one, would seem to do violence to our reason that we might reject the truth of God.

We close this part of the evidence with one more quotation from our Lord's testimony, which is certainly a very remarkable one, but upon which we will make no comment at present: "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said ye are Gods? *If he called them Gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said,* I AM THE SON OF GOD?"

CHAPTER III.

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL.

THE apostle Paul has said more upon the question under consideration than any other inspired writer. Indeed, if we leave out the testimony of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels and in the Apocalypse, Paul has written more which bears directly upon the subject, than all the other writers of the New Testament. We shall not, therefore, attempt to give all that he has taught us concerning the unity of God, and the person and character of his Son; but will try to so arrange his evidence under different heads, that by referring to a part, we may be able to form a correct opinion as to the whole.

We notice, first, that he speaks of but one God, and declares that one to be the Father. "There is," he states, "none other God but one." "There is but one God the Father."[1] "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."[2]

[1] 1 Cor. 8:4, 6. [2] Eph. 4:6.

"There is one God."[1] Beside these, there are about twenty other places where he calls God "the Father," and "our Father," and not a single place where he does not seem to use these terms as synonymous, or where he ever speaks of the Godhead as if it could be divided. And in this we see how perfectly the testimony of Paul agrees with that of Christ; for while the latter declares that the Father is God, and that he is "the only true God," so Paul tells us that there is but one God, and that one is the Father. While they both talk so much about God the Father, they neither of them ever use the expression "God the Son." If there is such a person, they have never revealed it; and if such a one does exist, it is certainly very strange that this phrase is not to be found in the writings of Paul, especially, since he speaks so much about "God the Father." If they are two distinct persons of the Godhead, and are equally divine, why does he speak so many times of God the Father, and never once of God the Son? It is about the Godhead of the Son that we should expect him most to speak and write, since it is his divinity *alone* that has been questioned. No one has ever doubted the Deity of the Father, and if there is a second person called God the Son, and it is necessary that we should believe in him as such, why

[1] 1 Tim. 2:5.

has not Paul revealed it? His own answer is: "There is but *one* God the *Father*"—"One God and Father of all"—"The Father of Spirits."

But he not only declares that God is *one*, and that he is our Father, but he states, further, that he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We find him more than once exclaiming: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Sometimes he calls him "the Father" of Christ, and in one place "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." If there was in Christ, then, any other Deity, or divine person, except the Father, that divine person had a Father and a God the same as we have, and hence could not be himself supreme.

This is the statement of Paul, many times repeated, and with it agrees, as we have already seen, the testimony of Christ himself. Our Father and our God is his Father and his God; and if there is in Christ still another divine being, who is God the Son, we must be willing to admit that there are two Deities, and that one is inferior to the other. For if the one is the God and Father of the other, it would make the first a being as distinct from the second as he is from us; and if the Father sustains to the Son the same relation that he does to all other beings, and if to say that one is our God, implies that he is our *Creator*, then the Son is a created being.

Now, if the apostle believed that the Son was God, and desired to teach this truth to us, as it is claimed he did; and if it is his divinity alone which was then, and is *now*, disputed, would he have taken this method to prove it? Would he have told us that the Son had a Father and a God, the same as we have? and that the Father was the "one God and Father of all,"—"the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort"? If he wanted to convince us that the Son was supremely divine, and equal with the Father, would we not expect to hear him say: "Blessed be God the Son,"—"There is but one God the Son,"—"One God the Son, who is above all, and through all, and in all"? If he uses these expressions so frequently in reference to the Father, whose divinity has never been questioned, why does he not *sometimes* use them when speaking of the Son? And, further, if there dwelt in Christ a Divine Son, born from eternity, whose God is he? He is not the God of the human Son in whom he is said to dwell; nor is he our God, because the one who sustains to us that relation is declared to be the Father. He is not, according to the testimony of Paul, the God of any one, but had himself both a Father and a God.

We call attention to this, because in every place where the Godhead of the Son is flatly contradicted,

or made impossible, Trinitarians tell us that the writer is there only speaking of the humanity of the Son of God, but that there is in him another Son who is the eternal Jehovah. And hence we are often in doubt as to which Son they are talking about, the human or the divine; and when the Son of God is himself speaking, we do not know which person he means, or who the speaker in that place may be. We must use our best judgment, learned men tell us, and decide from the circumstances, and the language used, whether the man is speaking or the Deity. But if there is only *one* Supreme Being, and that one is called the Father; if he is declared to be the God and Father of all, who is above all, and in all, and is even declared to be the God of our Lord Jesus Christ; then, if there is beside him *a Son* who is supremely divine, whose Deity *is he*, and where does he belong? If the divinity of our Lord is the *Son*, and *not* the Father, this divine Son must be the God and Father of our Lord's humanity, or else he is not a Deity at all. But the Scriptures show us plainly that he cannot be the God of any one. They speak of another person, who is the God and Father of all created beings, and declare that beside him there can be no other. But more on this point hereafter.

We notice, next, that while the apostle speaks of

the Father as our God, and the one "who is above all," he describes the Son as a man through whom God the Father forgives sins, and dispenses his blessings unto men, and by whom he will judge them at the last day. We will give his own words. "God," he says, "hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that man* whom he hath ordained."[1] "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through *this man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."[2] "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin . . . For if through the offense of one [man], many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by *one man*, *Jesus Christ*, hath abounded unto many. . . . For if by one man's offense death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one [man], Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore, as by the offense of one [man], judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [man], the free gift came; . . . for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [man] shall many be made righteous."[3] "For since by man came death, *by man* came also the resurrection of the dead. . . . For as in Adam all die, even so in

[1] Acts 17 : 31. [2] Acts 13 : 38. [3] Rom. 5 : 12, 15, 17, 18, 19.

Christ shall all be made alive. . . . The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit . . . The first man is of the earth earthy; the second *man* is the Lord from heaven."[1] "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus. . . . All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. . . . To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."[2] "For through him [Christ] we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access by one spirit unto the Father."[3] "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."[4] "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."[5] "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus."[6] "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses. . . . But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God."[7]

The great importance of this evidence is our reason for giving so much of it. The apostle here teaches that what we enjoy in this life, and all that we can hope to be in the life to come, we receive from God the Father through the mediation and atonement of his Son, the man Christ Jesus. All that the Son of

[1] 1 Cor. 15 : 21, 22, 45, 47. [2] 2 Cor. 4 : 14; 5 : 18, 19. [3] Eph. 2 : 18. [4] Col. 3 : 17. [5] 1 Thes. 5 : 9. [6] 1 Tim. 2 : 5. [7] Heb. 3 : 3; 10 : 12.

God has done to raise man from his fallen condition, and to reinstate him in the divine favor, and which has been regarded as the proof of his divinity, is ascribed to him here as the work of a man. Through him we have pardon and salvation, the gift of the Spirit, the resurrection of the dead, and everlasting life beyond the grave. As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so has the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by *one man*, *Jesus Christ*, abounded unto many. And as by the offense of one man, death reigned by one, and judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of *one man* the free gift came, and they which receive of this gift, and of the abundance of grace, shall reign in life by him. As by man came death, by *man* came also the resurrection of the dead; and as by the offense of one all must die, so in the man Christ Jesus, shall all be made alive. In this man God is now reconciling the world unto himself, and by him he will judge it at the time appointed. While there is but one God the Father, he declares that there is but one mediator, and that he is *the man Christ Jesus*. Through this same man we have access unto the Father, and are commanded to do all things in his name, giving thanks to God and the Father thereby.

While we have all things, then, through the Son

of God, and while his name is the only one which has ever been given whereby we can be saved; the one who has made these provisions, and who has appointed this man to be our Prince and Saviour, is God the Father. To deny this, in the face of the evidence before us, would be as unreasonable as to dispute against the sun. If we accept the testimony, we must admit that the only living and true God is the Father, and that the one through whom he bestows these blessings, is the man whom we call Jesus, and who is also called the Son of God.

But the apostle teaches, further, that this same person *died*, and was raised from the dead by the power of God. The many statements which he makes, as to the fact of his death and resurrection, are so familiar to all, that we do not deem it necessary to give any of them. He does not say that the humanity of the Son suffered and died, but that Jesus Christ, and God's Son, was dead and buried; and that he was declared to be *the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead.* He tells us that that great and exalted being who performs the works of Deity, and who has a name which is above every name; the one before whom every knee shall bow, and to whom every tongue shall confess; that this same exalted personage became obedient unto death, even the death of the

cross. He who receives these honors, and who is to be the judge of quick and dead, and who, for these reasons, is thought to be God; did, according to his own testimony, and according to the testimony of all his apostles, actually suffer and die, and had a resurrection from the dead, the same as will other men. And not only does he state that the Son of God *died*, but that he was raised from the dead by the *Father*. He does not intimate that there was in Christ one who is called God the Son, and that he was the one who raised up our Lord from the dead, or that he assisted in his resurrection, or even that there is such a being. But he *does* say that God raised him up, and then, that there may be no mistake, he declares that it is "God the *Father* who raised him from the dead;" and, again, that "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father."

But it is thought that if there was not in Christ one who is called God the Son, there could be no merit in his death. If the being who suffered and died was not divine, he could not make an atonement for sin. It was the glory of his divinity, we are told, which "penetrated and surrounded his humanity," that gave efficacy to the shedding of his blood, whereby an offended Deity became reconciled to rebellious man. But, surely, it was not the divinity in Christ

which died, and was raised from the dead; and if not, what good could that Deity do more than any other? If it dwelt in Christ, and made his sacrifice acceptable to God, because of its union with his humanity, could not the Father do the same? Did he not dwell in Christ? and could not his divinity "penetrate and surround" the humanity of our Lord, so as to make his offering as meritorious as if some other divine person had been in him? And, besides, if the Son is God, and God the Father had to be reconciled by such an infinite sacrifice; who was there to reconcile God the Son? If he is God, as is claimed, man had broken his law, and had trampled his honor in the dust, and would be under his displeasure, the same as he was under the Father's. On this supposition he, too, would need to be reconciled; and if it be said that in making satisfaction to his Father, he made satisfaction to all, then we admit that one person in the Trinity can make his broken law honorable, and an atonement for the sins of the world, by the offering which he *himself* makes; and if God the Son can do this, so could God the Father, and there would still be no necessity for any but the Father. But the Bible does not speak of but one that had to be reconciled, and that one was the Father; and, indeed, it does not even say that he had to be reconciled to man, but that *man had to be*

reconciled to him, and that this reconciliation was effected through his Son. In other words, it declares "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," and that "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

But leaving this part of the evidence, about which much more might be said, we wish to consider another point in the testimony of Paul, which is certainly of great importance, and which, we think, ought to be a settlement of the whole question. While the Son has a kingdom, which, as we have seen, was given to him by the Father; and while the apostle declares that the Son must reign until all his enemies have been subdued; there is a time coming, he declares further, when the Son shall have put all things under his feet, and that after this he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and will himself become subject to him. He has given this in language so plain that we cannot possibly misunderstand him. After telling us that as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; and that as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, he adds: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The

last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then *shall the Son also himself be subject unto* him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15, 24–28.)

While the Son, then, has now a kingdom, and while he will reign over it, until all his enemies have been subdued; the one who gave him this kingdom, and by whose power he is to conquer his foes, is the Father. And when this is accomplished, then will the Son deliver up the kingdom to God his Father, and will forever after become one of his subjects.

But if the Son is indeed himself God, would there ever be a time when he would be without a kingdom, and when he would no longer be acknowledged as our king? — a time when the power and authority which he now has will be exercised by another, and when the only divine person who is known and worshiped as "God over all" is the Father? The Son is to become subject unto the Father, that the latter may be all and in all. Then is the Son God? Can one person who is supremely divine be in subjection to another forever? The apostle is very careful to inform us that the Father cannot be subject unto the Son. "When he saith all things are put under him [that is under the Son], it is manifest," he tells us, "that he [the Father] *is excepted*

which did put all things under him." And if the Father put all things under the Son, and cannot be subject to him because he is God, how can the Son be God and yet be subject to the Father? What kind of a Deity is he who is no longer Lord and King, but who has been divested of his power and authority in the government of the universe, and is himself in subjection to the Supreme God? And yet this is the subordinate position which the Son is to occupy, according to these clear and most positive statements of the apostle, and there is not a word of testimony in the Bible to contradict it.

We cannot say that it is simply the humanity of the Son which is to become subject unto the Father, and that he has a divinity which will still continue to be our supreme ruler the same as before; that God the Son, who is one person of the Trinity, and who, as such, reigns over men and exercises his authority now, through his humanity, will then no longer reign over them visibly, and through the medium of his human nature, but directly and immediately; and that he will still be our God and King immortal, though invisible to all. We cannot explain it in this way because it would contradict the testimony. It does not say that the kingdom will be delivered up to God the Son; or that he will have any share in the administration of its

government; or that the Trinity, as one God, will reign supreme; or that the Father, in the name of the three, will assume the reins of government; but it declares that the kingdom will be delivered up to "God even the Father;" that it was the Father who put all things under the Son, and that it is to the Father that all things are to be surrendered, that he may be all in all. All things are to become subject to him, and if any of them are Deities, we must admit a plurality, and also that they are subordinate to the Father.

In this very remarkable passage, the apostle has certainly taught us some of the greatest truths which have ever been revealed to man. From it we may learn who the Son is, for what purpose he came into the world, and why he has been so highly exalted of God. Trinitarians have tried to explain his dependence upon the Father, by saying, that when he was on earth, he acted in the capacity of a servant; and that regarding him in this light, he is described as inferior to the one who sent him into the world; but that this lasted only during the days of his humiliation and suffering while here in the flesh, and that having finished his work, he ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, where he will remain and be worshiped as "God over all blessed forever." But if we are to believe the teachings of the great apostle, the reign of the Son will not

be eternal; neither will his authority, after a certain period in the future, ever be equal again to what it is at the present time. Nor is he said to be inferior to the Father, because of his humility and the things which he suffered in the world; but it is because he endured these things, and was obedient to the will of his Father, that he has been so highly exalted. It is because "he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," that God has given him the place which he now occupies, and a name which is above every other. If this is not correct, the apostle Paul was certainly mistaken. He has clearly taught us that the Son of God did suffer and die, and that while he is now subordinate to the Father, there is a time coming when his power and authority will be less than it is at present, and when he will become one of the subjects of the great and glorious kingdom of our God.

We might call attention to other passages in which he teaches that the Father is the only true and living God, and that the Son is *that man* in whom the Father dwelt; but will pass to consider now that part of his evidence where it is thought that he teaches a different doctrine. The writings of Paul have always been referred to by those who believe in the supreme divinity of the Son, and it is claimed that he has given us evidence of this which cannot be overthrown. He has,

in some places, so clearly pointed out a person of the Godhead in Christ, who is distinct from the Father, and yet equal with him, that to deny it, they think would be both foolish and wicked. Now, if this be true, it is certainly our duty to find out where this testimony is. We shall be very much surprised if we find that he has, anywhere, contradicted that which he has declared to us so many times in the examination already made. We do not believe that he has, and will give the very passages in dispute to prove that he has not. What he has said in the first chapter of Colossians, and in the first chapter of Hebrews, is most frequently quoted, and is that upon which Trinitarians rely most when discussing this subject. We will therefore examine carefully what he has said in both places, beginning with what he has said in the first chapter of Hebrews.

He begins by telling us that God who "spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (verses 1, 2). The first verse certainly does not prove that the Son is God — because, if it did, it would also prove that the prophets were. But it does show that he is not God. God is the one who had spoken unto "the fathers," and who was then

speaking to the world; and the persons by whom he spake were at one time the prophets, and at another time his Son. It was God who had the message to deliver, and the prophets and his Son were the persons by whom he delivered it. Then the Deity was a being as distinct from his Son as he was from the prophets, or as he is from any other being.

In the second verse he tells us that God has appointed his Son heir of all things. But, surely, this does not prove that the Son is God; for, if he was, he would not be called an heir of God, nor could he be an heir of any one. But he would be the living and eternal Jehovah, who has himself many heirs and many children, both in heaven and on earth. We are "all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus," and "as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God . . . and if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." So that he being called a *Son* and an *heir* is no evidence that he is God, but is evidence very conclusive that he is not. Nor does the fact that he is said to be heir "of all things," make the case any stronger; because it declares that the Son has this by *appointment*, and that the one who appointed him is *God*. If the one who made the appointment is the Deity, then the one who received it cannot be. Nor could the Son, if he was

truly God, be appointed to anything, because there could be none greater to make it.

But he not only tells us in this verse that God has appointed his Son heir of all things, but that *by him* "also he made the worlds." We are gravely told that the Son is here declared to be the creator of all things, and that if this is true, he must be God. But, waiving other considerations for the present, does Paul say that God's Son made the worlds, or does he say that *God* made them *by him?* If the apostle is here speaking of the creation of the universe, and had declared that the Son created it, we might then argue from this passage his supreme divinity. But if he tells us that *God* made them, and that he did it by his Son, then it is evidence that the Son is not himself God. We have seen that God will raise the dead, and that he will judge the world by *that man* who is called his Son; that *by him* we have been reconciled to God, and have pardon and salvation; that by him he was then speaking to men, though he had spoken to them by the prophets, and that by this same one he had also made the worlds. Does this prove that the Son is our Creator? If the fact that God works by or through his Son is evidence that his Son is equal with him, then is that man by whom he will judge the secrets of all hearts, and by whom came also the resurrection of the

dead, not a *man*, as he is declared to be, but a Deity; and so also are all the prophets. But if the one who made the worlds is a being distinct from the one *by whom* he made them, then this passage proves that the Son is not God.

What we are to understand by the phrase "made the worlds," will be considered in the next chapter. All that we *now* insist upon is, that whatever this and other similar expressions may mean, as they do not say that the *Son* created, but that *God* did, *by him*, we cannot argue from them the Son's supreme divinity. And that the apostle does not mean to teach it in this place, will appear still more clearly as we proceed.

Having told us that God has appointed his Son heir of all things, and that by him he made the worlds, he goes on: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." If the Son was God, he would not be called the likeness or image of God, but would be the original; neither would it be said that he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, because this implies that there is one higher than himself. The one who sits there is the Deity; and he who sits at his right hand is not that

Deity, but is the one whom "God hath highly exalted;" and hence it is said, in another place, that he is set down on the right hand of God.

Next, he compares the Son to angels: "Being made," he says, "so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they." The Son, he here declares, was made better than the angels, and has obtained, by his inheritance, a more excellent name. Then there must have been some one who *made* him, and some one from whom he received this inheritance. But he has already told us that he received it from God; that God had appointed him heir of all things; and now he states that he was made better than the angels, and has a more excellent name. Does this look as if he was God? Was the Deity ever made by any one, or appointed to anything? And, beside, does not the fact that he is compared to angels prove that he is not divine? Is it not true that God is not only "better than the angels," but infinitely above all created beings? And if we are said to have been made a "little lower than the angels," and the Son "much better" than they, does it not show that they are all finite beings? But he goes on with the comparison: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And,

again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" God has never conferred the honor upon angels which he has upon his Son. He never said to any of them, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," etc.; but he did say this to his Son, which proves that his Son is "much better," as he before stated. God is the person speaking, and his Son is the person spoken to. Then, unless the Deity was speaking to himself, the Son cannot be God. But we proceed. In the next verse he tells us further: "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Paul tells us (Acts 13:33) that the words "*Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee*," and which are quoted from the second Psalm, refer to the resurrection of Christ; and Trinitarians themselves admit that the expression, *when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world*, refers to the same event. They believe that a more correct translation would be: "but when he bringeth again, or the second time, his first-begotten into the world;" and we think they are correct. The meaning, then, is, that when God raised his Son from the dead, he commanded the angels to worship him. But if he was raised from the dead, can he be called the everlasting Jehovah? The Son says himself, after his resurrec-

tion: "I am he that liveth *and was dead*, and behold I am alive for evermore." Now, if he was "once dead," he cannot be the *everliving* and *eternal God.* And, further, we must remember that it was not only God who raised him from the dead, but that it was God who also said that he should be worshiped. The Son was to receive these honors by the command or appointment of that Being who has appointed him heir of all things. It does not say that the angels had worshiped him before his resurrection, or that he ever would have been afterward, if the Deity had not ordained that he should be. But if he had always been the object of supreme worship, no command would have been necessary; neither could there have been a greater one to give that command. The fact that God raised him from the dead, and placed him at his own right hand, while it shows that the Son has been "highly exalted," it also proves that he is a being dependent upon another for the position which he occupies and the honors which he receives. And if it still be asked why he should be thus honored, we answer, because he is the representative of God; because God is, through him, reigning over men and angels, and because it is declared that in paying him these divine honors, they do it to "the glory of God the Father." God has "appointed" and "ordained"

that *by this man*, and *for him*, thus it should be, and no one can question either his motives or his right so to do.

In the next three verses, still comparing the Son to angels, he says: "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

In the eighth verse, it will be seen that the Son is called God; and this is, therefore, regarded as another proof of his supreme divinity. But this Son is the same one of whom it is declared that, on a certain day, he was begotten of God; whom we are here told God has appointed heir of all things, to whom he has given a place at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and by whom he has spoken to men. He is the one whom the angels are to honor, and of whom it is said, in the next verse, that God, *even his God*, has anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows. The person addressing him is not only our God, but is also *his* God; and if he gives to his Son the same title by which he is himself called, it is evident, from the

connection, that he uses it in a subordinate sense. He calls him God in the same sense that angels are sometimes called Gods, and in which Moses is said to have been a God to Aaron, or in which Joseph declares that he was in the place of God to his brethren. Christ has himself told us, as we have seen, that they were called Gods *unto whom the Word of God came;* and this "scripture," he further states, "cannot be broken." If, then, the Son is called God, in this place, it must be in a similar sense; because we are told, both before and after, that there is one greater than the Son, who has given to him all that he possesses, and that this one is as truly his God as he is ours. But some of our ablest and most learned commentators say that this verse is not correctly translated. The noun *God*, in the original, is in the nominative case, and not in the vocative, as we have translated it. They, therefore, think it should read thus: "But unto the Son he saith, *God is thy throne* forever and ever." Doctor Adam Clark himself admits that it is in the nominative case, but contends that it is often used for the vocative, and thinks it ought to be so used here. He tells us that the learned Doctor Wakefield believes it should be read in the nominative, and vindicates this translation at large in his "History of Opinions;" and that Wiclif, Coverdale, Tindal, and many others,

all read it in the nominative, though a number of them believe that it should here have the force of the vocative. Now, if it is in the nominative, and this much, at least, is certainly correct, then, unless we translate it in a different case from what it is in the original, this passage is no proof at all that the Son is God, but is proof directly to the contrary. To say that *God is thy throne*, is very different from saying, *Thy throne, O God*, etc.; and we have never seen any good reason why Paul should write a noun in one case when he intended it to be in another. To read it in the nominative certainly agrees better with the preceding verses, and with the one also which immediately follows. But, while we believe the last to be the correct translation, it is not necessary that we insist upon it, because the context most clearly shows that, if he is called God, it must be in an inferior sense, as before stated. The very next verse reads: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The kings, and priests, and prophets in Israel, were consecrated to their several offices by anointing, and of the Son it is here declared that they are his *fellows*. But, while some of these ancient worthies held two of these sacred offices, and

others but one, and while some of them were, therefore, above others, so the Son, because he held all three of these offices, is said to have been anointed above them all. But if he was the true God, would these men be called his fellows, and could there be another greater Deity to conduct him into his office, and to give him this higher anointing? If God thus addresses his Son, does it not prove that he is greater than his Son? Could he, in any way, have taught us more clearly that he was God, and that his Son was not, than by saying: "Therefore God, *even thy God*, hath anointed thee," etc.?

The next three verses will be considered in the following chapter. We, therefore, pass to notice briefly the last two: "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" These words are quoted from the one hundred and tenth Psalm, and they show that, while David and Paul both regarded the Son as the most highly exalted of God, they neither of them believed that he was God. First, they tell us that God has placed his Son at his own right hand; and, Second, that he is to remain there until God has subdued all his enemies. He is to occupy this place

of preëminence and of power until his last foe has been destroyed; and then, as we have seen, he will deliver up the kingdom to his Father, and become one of his subjects. Surely there is nothing in these verses from which any one could infer the Deity of the Son. It is God who placed him there, and it is God who subdues his enemies.

We have now gone over nearly all of this interesting and important chapter, and understand its teachings to be: 1st. That God has a Son whom he has appointed heir of all things. 2d. That the Son is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and having finished his work on earth, he was placed at the right of the Majesty on high. 3d. That he was made better than the angels, and has obtained by his inheritance a more excellent name. 4th. He is declared to have been begotten of God. 5th. God raised him from the dead, and, after his resurrection, commanded the angels to worship him. 6th. He not only declares that he is a Father to the Son, but that he is also his God; and that his Son is to sit at his right hand until he has subdued his enemies.

Now, if Paul had said these things of the creator of all things, what would we have thought? If he had said that the everlasting God was, at a certain time, begotten by another; that he was *made* better than

the angels, and had a *better inheritance*, and a *more excellent name;* that he had been appointed heir of all things, and had a Father and a God; that he was not himself supreme, but had been appointed to sit on the right hand of him who was; and that after his death and resurrection, this greater Deity had told the angels to worship him — if he had said these things of God the Father, "who is above all," would they have agreed with his teachings in other places? Would they not contradict all that the Bible has taught us about our Father and our God? And yet, if these views of the Supreme Being appear to us so revolting, they are equally so when applied to the Son, if they affirm that he is *himself* that Supreme Being, or even that he is equal with him.

We notice, next, the passage in Colossians. Of the Son of God he there declares: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were made by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preëminence. For it pleased the

Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Col. 1:15–19). Trinitarians regard this as the strongest evidence which the apostle Paul has furnished in proof of the Godhead of the Son, and they do not think that he could ever have used such language unless he had believed that the Son was truly and supremely divine. We think we can show, on the contrary, that he would never have used such language if he *had* believed him to be truly divine. In the first place, he tells us that the Son is the image of the invisible God, and that he is the first-born of every creature. He does not say that he is God, but that he is God's *image;* and, as we have before stated, if he is the image, he cannot be the original; if he is the likeness of another, he cannot be the one from whom the likeness is taken. The original is God, and he stamped upon his Son his own image, the same as he did upon Adam — for it is declared that he was also created in the image of God. If man was made in the image of his maker, and if the child of God is said to be renewed in knowledge "after the image of him that created him," does this prove that man is God? And if not, does the fact that the Son is said to be in this same image, prove that he is God? There might be many *images* or *likenesses*, but there can be but one *original*, if there is but one God; and if the Son is not that original, but is a likeness taken

from it, the same as was man, and the same, perhaps, as were also the angels; does not that prove that he is not God? If he was the Supreme Being, he could not be his image, but would be that from which all the rest were taken. And, further, what is meant by saying that he is the "first-born of every creature," and "the first-born from the dead?" Would Paul have said this if he believed the Son to be the *everliving God?* Would he have said that the Deity was dead, and that he was the first-born from the dead? That this is what he means by the last expression, has never, we believe, been questioned; nor do we think that any sane man would attempt to deny it. And it does not matter what we may think he means by saying that the Son is the first-born of every creature, we cannot apply these words to that Being who has existed from eternity. We cannot say that he is the first-born of all creatures, any more than we can say that he is the last. God is not a "creature," nor was he ever born. He never had a beginning, and will never have an end.

Nor does the apostle say that the Son is the creator of all things. What is here meant by creation, as connected with the Son of God, is not a question to be considered at present. In the next chapter, we will try to ascertain, if we can, what is meant by this and other similar expressions. Whatever it may mean, it

does not teach that the Son is the Creator. In Hebrews, as we have seen, the apostle declares that God created *by his Son.* In Ephesians he uses this language: "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, *who created all things by Jesus Christ.*" In the chapter before us he states that *by him* were created all things, etc. In every place he affirms that the Son is the one *by* or *through* whom this work was done; and in two of them he expressly declares that the being who, through the Son, performed this work, was God. Then the Son did not *himself* create, but God did *by him.* We are told that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but it is nowhere stated that the Son created them; nor does the Bible teach that he ever created anything, but that God did *by him*, the same as he is said to have done a great many other things by him, where it is distinctly stated at the same time that he was only a man.

The Son "is the head of the body, the church;" but in another place he also declares, that the head of the Son, or Christ, is God. Then he states, further, that he is "the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preëminence." But does this look as if the apostle thought he was God?

Was it not God that raised him from the dead, and appointed him head of all things? And, beside, it is stated in the very next verse that the Son occupies this place because such is the pleasure of God. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." But if he holds this place at the pleasure of another, does not that prove that he is not supreme? If the Son was himself the Deity, would not all fullness dwell in him, whether it pleased some other one or not? Would he be dependent upon another for his place in creation, and the honors which he is to receive? His being the first-born from the dead, and having the highest place "above his fellows," no more makes him equal with the Great Jehovah, than if he had been the lowest of all, and the last that was raised from the dead. Once admit that he had a resurrection from the dead, and that he holds his present position at the pleasure, or by the appointment of another, and the question of his supreme divinity must be given up forever. He cannot be the everliving and independent One, if he was once dead, and is now declared to be inferior to and dependent upon another. And yet all this, and even more than this, is said of him in this very chapter.

We ought, before closing this part of the evidence, perhaps, to notice one passage in Philippians, though

we have already partially considered it more than once. It reads: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:5–11.)

The apostle here certainly teaches this much, at least: 1st. That the being he describes became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 2d. That God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every other. 3d. That while every knee bows to him, and every tongue confesses that he is Lord, they do this to the glory of God the Father. This much at least is plain, whatever else we may think is taught. We know that many learned and conscientious men, while they have differed very much as to the precise meaning of the sixth verse,

believe this passage, nevertheless, to teach that the Son is truly God. And if we were only to consider this one verse by itself, we might be in doubt as to what it did mean. But if we take with it that which immediately follows, and which is a part of the same sentence, we shall find that the one who is said to have been in the form of God, and who took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, that *this same one* became obedient unto death, and was afterward highly exalted of God. It does not say that he was God, but that he was in the *form* of God, and that after his deep humiliation and death, God gave him a name and a place above every other. It was the Father who gave him this place of honor, and it is to the glory of the Father that divine honors are paid to his Son. But if this highly exalted being was once dead, and has received all that he has from another, he cannot be the supreme God. If this is not true, all of our views of the Deity have been wrong, and must be given up. If a being can die, and after that be exalted by his Father, and have a name given to him, and yet be equal to the one from whom he received these things; then we have greatly mistaken the teachings of the Bible, as to the nature and the attributes of the Deity, and may admit that the Son is equal with the Father, and that the two are *one* su-

preme being. But if our views have been correct, and if these things cannot be affirmed of the *everliving One*, who is "from everlasting to everlasting"; then the Son is not the Deity, but *the man* in whom the Deity dwells.

There are a few other passages in the writings of Paul to which we might call attention, but do not deem it necessary. We have now examined that part of his evidence upon which Trinitarians rely most, and to which, in the discussion of this question, they most frequently refer. We have also seen what he has said which is unfavorable to their view, and from this testimony, as a whole, would draw the following conclusions:

First, That the only Deity of which the apostle speaks is the Father. If there is any other one he has certainly failed to tell us. The Son is not, according to his teachings, either independent or eternal. In those passages where the highest titles are given to him, and which Trinitarians regard as most favorable to their view, he is even there represented as being dependent upon the Father. In Hebrews, in Colossians, and in Philippians, where it is claimed that his supreme divinity is most clearly set forth — in these very passages he is described as having derived his existence from another, and as having received from

him all that he possesses. He was begotten, died, had a resurrection, is now doing his Father's will, and will be subject to him forever. There is not a place where the Son is said to be equal with the Father, or where he is declared to be independent of him. The Father is, everywhere, said to be self-existent and eternal, but the Son never. The Father is not dependent upon the Son, but the Son ever was and ever will be dependent upon the Father. We therefore conclude, that if the Bible clearly reveals that "the Lord our God is one Lord," Paul as clearly teaches that *that* one is the Father.

A second conclusion which we draw from the testimony of Paul is, that, as the Father is declared to be the only supreme and independent God, there is therefore in the Godhead *but one person.* He has never intimated that there are three; much less that one of these is a Son born from eternity. And if there are three, the apostle certainly did not know it; for as much as he has written, he has not only failed to speak of it, but has said many things which would contradict it. From what he has said about the nature and character of the Supreme Being, we should conclude that a division of the Godhead into different persons would be impossible, and that the doctrine of an eternal Sonship is not only a self-contradiction, but

a most palpable absurdity. In all his epistles he has taught that the Deity is one, and cannot be divided.

A third conclusion, or inference, is, that as the Son is dependent upon the Father, and is yet said to be one with him; and as the one was born of a woman, while the other is declared to be his Father and his God; therefore the Son is not the Deity, but the human nature which the Deity assumed when he became incarnate. Indeed, we cannot see, from the testimony, how we can possibly come to any other conclusion. The Father is invariably called God, while the Son is said to have been born in time, and is declared to be a man. Then we conclude that he *was* a man, and that the Father who dwelt in him was, as he and Paul both declare, his God. And as Adam, because he had no earthly father, but came directly from the hands of his Maker, is therefore called the son of God; so the second Adam, because he had no earthly Father, but was begotten by the Deity, is not only called the Son of God, but also "the only begotten of the Father." That the Son was a man, that is, that there was in our Lord a perfect human nature is not disputed. The Bible everywhere declares it, and the church teaches it. But where is the evidence that there were in Christ two sons — the one human, the other divine; the one born in time, the other from

eternity? Did Christ ever reveal this? or has any inspired writer, in either the Old or the New Testaments? Saying nothing about how unreasonable and how absurd such a proposition would appear, and how much it would seem to contradict other teachings of the Word; upon whose authority do we believe it to be true? If we were to pause here a moment, we might conclude that, in order to be wise above what is written, we have admitted into our creeds that which came from men uninspired, and which, without destroying the unity of God, and, in fact, annihilating the very being of God, no sane man ever did or ever can believe. That God has a Son, who, though begotten of him, is yet himself the Supreme Being; and that there is still, beside these, a third person who is equal with them, and yet only one Lord—we are glad that neither Paul nor any other inspired writer has ever taught what we conceive to be so monstrous a doctrine. We would sooner believe the teachings of the Bible than those of the councils of Nice and Constantinople; would receive what God has revealed, rather than the opinions of Athanasius, or any other mere man. If there was even one passage in which it was distinctly stated, that there were united in our Lord, not *one* Son simply, but *two*, and that while the one was perfect man, the other was perfect Deity;

strange as this might seem, we should not dispute it. But as only one is spoken of, and he is declared to be a man, we will accept the testimony, and conclude that it means precisely what it says.

Still another conclusion, or inference, which we draw from the testimony of Paul is, that as the Father is God, while the Son is said to have been born of a woman, and is called a man; and as these are in each other, and are said to be one in Christ; therefore, in him, as the church also teaches, there is perfect God and perfect man; and as the Spirit of the Father is also the Spirit of Christ, therefore, in our Lord Jesus Christ alone is the divine Trinity of Father and Son and Holy Spirit: the Father is the Deity, the Son the humanity, and the Holy Ghost the spirit of God which dwelt in Christ, and which, from him, is shed abroad in the hearts of all believers. We say that the Father is the Deity of our Lord, because he is the only divine being who is said to have dwelt in him, and because he is the only one there *can* be, unless we admit a plurality of Gods. And we say that the Son is the humanity of our Lord, not only because he is called a man, but for the further reason that if he is not, Christ could not have any human nature at all. The Bible does not say that the Father is a man, but teaches that he is God; nor does any one claim that

either the Father or the Holy Spirit are, of themselves, in any sense human. So that if, by the Son, we are not to understand the humanity of Christ, we must deny that he had any humanity. If the Deity did become incarnate, the human which he then assumed, and with which he clothed himself, as it were, in order to save a fallen world, is that which is called the Son, and cannot be any other.

The apostle has expressed the whole truth in a few words when he declares that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" and again, when he states that in Christ "dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" and still again, that as "the head of every man is Christ," so "the head of Christ is God." He leaves the Deity undivided, and asserts in Christ that fullness of God which has been the joy of believers in every age of the Christian church. He does not state that one person of the Godhead simply dwelt in Christ, but that *God* was in him — the one living God in all his fullness — that he dwelt in his Son, and that by him he reconciled the world unto himself. He could not state in plainer terms the object of the incarnation, and who it was that became incarnate, than he has in the first passage just quoted. Nor could he have said in any way more clearly that the being in whom God dwelt was not himself the

Deity, than by telling us that he was his Son, and that by his obedience and death this reconciliation was effected.

We conclude, then, finally, that as there is in the Godhead but one person, and that one is in Christ, we should not, therefore, worship him as three, but as *one* Lord. Our affections should not be divided, a part on a Deity, or a person of the Godhead, out of Christ, and a part on one who is in Christ; but should come to him as our only King and Saviour; the one in whom dwells all the fullness of God, and beside whom there neither is nor can be any other. He is our Lord and Redeemer, and the only object of divine worship either in heaven or in earth. In the Son dwells a Deity undivided and *indivisible;* and through him, by God's own appointment, we have access unto the Father. And whenever we are willing to renounce the doctrine of a Trinity of persons, and that one of these, by his sufferings and death, made satisfaction to the other, and appeased, as it were, his wrath — two dogmas, the second resulting from the first, and neither of which have any warrant from the Word of God — whenever we are willing to renounce these, and to center our affections upon the one God who is in Christ, then of the church it can truly be said: "Thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

CHAPTER IV.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN.

NEXT to Christ and Paul, the most important witness is the apostle John. Though he has said but little touching this question in comparison with Paul, his testimony is yet in some respects of even more importance.

He begins his gospel very much as Moses commences his account of the creation. The latter informs us that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" while John declares that "in the beginning was the Word." Then, as Moses represents each act of the creation as having been performed by the *command* or *word* of God; so John states that by this *word* "all things were made," and that without it "was not anything made that was made." "God *said*, Let there be light," is the language of Moses, "and there *was* light." "God *said*, Let the earth bring forth . . . and it was so." And so on through the chapter, each act is said to have been per-

formed by the word of the Lord. Hence the Psalmist declares that "by the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth;" and again, that "he *spake* and it was *done;* he *commanded*, and it stood fast." Paul states that "the worlds were framed by the word of God;" while Peter informs us that "by the word of God the heavens were of old," and that they, "by the same word, are kept in store," etc.

It is clear, in all these passages, and in others which might be given, that, by the *word* of the Lord, and by what he *said*, we are to understand what he *did*, or what he had determined to do. As we speak of what men say when describing what they do, and as the Bible speaks of them in the same way, so does it also speak of the acts of the Deity. It tells us what he *says* when revealing to us what he *does*. And, hence, whatever God has done, whether in the creation of the heavens and the earth, or in the creation, preservation, and redemption of man, he is said to have done it by the word which proceeded out of his mouth. He is represented as upholding and controlling "all things by the word of his power." When he speaks, the winds and the seas are silent; the sun, the moon, and the stars obey his commands. "He uttered his voice, the earth melted." "He com-

mandeth the sun, and it riseth not." "The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof." So, too, all that he has done to enlighten man is said to be by this same word of truth. God spake to Abraham, and to all the ancient worthies. Moses heard his voice in the burning bush and from the mountain top. The word of the Lord came to him, and to Joshua, and to Samuel, and to all the prophets. And when he had finished speaking unto the fathers, by the prophets, he continued to reveal himself by his word, which he spake through his Son.

Now, when John speaks of the *word*, does he mean the same thing that the other inspired writers do, or does he mean something else? When he states that "the Word was with God," and that "the Word was God," and that by it "all things were made," does he mean the word of the Lord so frequently spoken of by Moses, and David, and Peter, and Paul, and all the other writers of the Bible, or is he speaking of a *distinct person* in the Godhead, not before revealed, and who is himself supremely divine? This is the only question that there can be to determine. The prophets unto whom "the word of the Lord came" did not understand nor teach that it was a *person* distinct from the one who gave it, or that it was one of *three persons*, having a consciousness and

will of its own, and susceptible of thought, and feeling, and volition. They do not speak of it as a person in the Godhead, any more than they would speak of the words of a man as a person; but they talk about the words of the Lord as they do about the words of the king, and mean by both precisely the same thing. And that John uses it in the same sense is evident, we think, from the following considerations:

In the first place, he uses the same term, from which we should infer that he meant the same thing. We have no right to conclude that, by the *word*, he means a *person*, when all the other writers of the Bible use the same term to denote what God was *doing*, or to express that which God had *declared*. And, indeed, we have the most direct evidence, from both John and Paul, that the word which dwelt in Christ, and which was spoken by him, was the same as that which had been spoken by the prophets. "The testimony of Jesus," says John, "is the spirit of prophecy." While Paul declares that God, who "spake in times past unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." It was the same God, then, which had been speaking all along; and the *word*, so called, was that which he had spoken.

Again, John not only uses the same term, but he

also predicates of it the same thing that do all the other inspired writers. He declares that *by* it all things were created, and if he means to teach that this word is a second Deity, or a distinct person from the one who gave it, his testimony would conflict with that of the other writers of the Bible, and consequently could not be received. The rest teach that by the word of God we are to understand that which God was *doing*, or that which he had *said;* and if John contradicts their testimony, his statement, standing alone, while all the other witnesses agree, would have to be rejected as untrue. It cannot be that the word of the Lord, by which he is said to have created all things, is a *person* distinct from him, and at the same time a *word spoken.* The words of Jehovah are not persons, any more than are the words of man; neither is a person the *word* simply of his mouth. Nor can it be true that God created the heavens and the earth by the words which proceeded from him, if it be true that this same work was done by a living and distinct person who is himself the Supreme Being. If by his word we are to understand at one time that which he was *himself* doing, and at another time that which his *Son* was doing; and if we then assert that his Son was God, because by him "he made the worlds," then what shall we do with the word which

is not God, but is only that which God had done, or the word which he had proclaimed? If they are both expressed by the same term, and have both performed the same work, how can they be distinguished? And if they are, in fact, distinct, how can they both be said to do the same thing? If God has created all things by his word, and this word is his Son, how could he create all things by the word which is not his Son? Or if it be said that he created by *both*, would not that make them both divine? And if we call the one a person, must we not also the other? And, besides this, how could the Deity be said to do anything by his word of command, when we affirm that it was done by a living and distinct person of his own Godhead? If the word by which God created is itself *indeed* the Supreme Being, then why should this Deity need the word or command of another? Why should one divine person be called *God*, and another divine person the *word* of God? If one of these persons is God, and his word is also God; and if he has still another word which is not God, and then in one place he declares that he made all things by his word which *is* God, and in another place by his word which *is not* God, does he not contradict himself, and teach, beside, that which would seem perfect nonsense?

If John, then, teaches that the Creator made all

things by his word, and that his word is a person distinct from himself, or is even one person *of* himself, while so many other inspired writers declare that it is not a distinct person, his testimony would conflict with that of the rest, and could not, therefore, be received as true. But believing that he wrote by inspiration, and that the passages before us are genuine, we conclude that by the *word* he means God himself as engaged in the great work of creation. In other words, he means by it precisely the same thing that Moses and the prophets have so clearly taught us that it does mean.

We should be led to the same conclusion, again, from the language which the apostle uses in describing the word. The word, he tells us, was in the beginning, and was with God. It is evident, from Gen. 1 : 1, that by the word "beginning" we are to understand the time when God began to create. And as each act of creation is said to have been performed by the word which God spake, or the command which he gave, so he is represented as beginning to *speak* and to *create* at one and the same time. Not anything existed until God said that it should be, and not a word is he said to have spoken until he was ready to commence. The first words which he uttered were: "*Let there be light*," and *light was*. There is no evidence from John, or

from any one else, that the word existed, or that the Deity had ever spoken, until he was about to begin the creation of the heavens and the earth. "In the *beginning* God created the heavens and the earth." "In the *beginning* was the *word*, and the word was with God." If the word, then, so called, is eternal, so are the works of God. If the Deity has always been creating, we might say that he had always been speaking; but if there was ever a time when nothing existed, there was a time when we have no evidence that he had ever spoken. For when he first began to speak, he at the same time, we are told, began to create. It is true that the word is said to have been before all things, and so it was, because we are informed that God first *spake*, and then that creation immediately followed. He spake the word, and the work was done. Hence Christ, speaking of himself as to the word, declares he is "the *beginning* of the creation of God." The God who had spoken the universe into existence, was then speaking through him in acts of redemption.

Now, if this is not correct — if John by the *word* does not mean the operations of the Deity — why does he say that it was in the beginning, and that in the beginning it was with God? He admits that it was with, and that it proceeded from, that Being who

is himself the supreme and eternal Jehovah, and, hence, that it could not be a person distinct from him, any more than could that which proceeds from the mind of man, when in action, be a person distinct from the man himself. And again, why does he say that all things were made by the word? It is nowhere stated in the Bible that the word created anything, but that God did *by it*. So we are told, in three places at least, that he created by his *spirit*. In another place the creation is declared to be the work of his hands. In others, again, he is represented as creating the heavens "by the breath of his mouth." Paul declares that God made all things by his Son, while Job informs us that "by his spirit he garnished the heavens." "When I consider thy heavens," says the Psalmist, "the work of thy fingers."

The Deity is represented as having a body, like man, and as working by means of it, the same as the soul does by means of the body in which it dwells. He has hands with which he works, feet with which he walks, and a mouth with which he speaks; he can see and hear, and think and feel, and performs all his labors through these bodily members and organs, the same as do men. And hence he is said to have an arm which is not shortened that he cannot save, and ears which are not heavy that they cannot hear, and eyes with

which he surveys his works, and by which he knows all that transpires in heaven, and earth, and hell. And hence he employs sometimes one mode of expression, and sometimes another, when speaking of what he does. Elijah and Elisha wrought miracles because "his hand" was upon them. Others are said to have done such things because his spirit came upon them.

But who ever concluded from this that God was corporeal — that he had a body and parts, and that all these different expressions are to be taken as literally true? And if any of them are to be so taken, must they not all be? If the Deity has voice and lungs, and speaks with his mouth, has he not also eyes and ears, and hands and feet, and all the other members of the human body? And if any one of these is to be regarded as a separate and distinct person, because the universe is said to have been created by it, must they not all be so regarded? If the word is a person distinct from the one who spake it, is not the arm of Jehovah, also? And if the spirit is still another person, are not the hands and feet so many more? Did not the Lord, with the one, frame the heavens, and, with the other, is it not said that "he treadeth the waves of the sea"? And if his voice, and the breath of his mouth, his mind and heart, his arms, his hands, his feet, and all the organs of sense, — if all these are

to be taken as so many different persons, would we not have nearer twenty than three?

And, further, the Word of God would, on this supposition, contradict itself from beginning to end. It first asserts that the creation was performed by one of these persons, and then another, and still another, until we would not know which was true, or whether it might not all be false. One declares that God created by his Son, another by his word, another by his spirit, and still another that he created with his hands.

Now, if the Deity is here speaking after the manner of men, this is all clear enough; but if we are to take these different expressions as literally true, and are to conclude that the word of the Lord, and his spirit, and all the bodily members which he is represented to have, and by which he is said to create and to preserve, — if we are to take these as so many different persons, we have divided the Godhead, not into three, but into almost as many as there are different parts to the human body; and have made the Bible, beside, a mass of contradictions and absurdities. If the word of God is, in fact, a distinct person in the Godhead, because by it all things are said to exist; and if, for the same reason, we are to conclude that so is the spirit, and so are all the bodily members by and with which the Deity is said to have performed his

works, then we have not only a plurality of Gods, but we have one who is supreme, and a large number of others who are inferior to him. The one who created all things is supreme; the Deities by whom he created are his subordinates.

By the same process of reasoning, we would be compelled to make an equal division of every human being. The man works with his mind, his heart, his will, and his voice; he sees with his eyes, hears with his ears, walks with his feet, and labors with his hands. He reveals his thoughts and his desires by the words of his mouth. What he is, and what he does, is more especially known by what he speaks. It is the *man* that does all this; though that by which he does it are these different members of his body. It is not the eye that sees, but the man by it; neither is it the ear that hears, but the man through it; and so of all the rest. It is the mind, the immortal soul, *the man*, that does all things. He is a spirit, and can no more be divided than can that Being in whose image he was created. So with God. He has created all things. He alone can create, because beside him there is none else; and his voice, the words of his mouth, his eyes, his arms, and hands and feet, by which he is said to see, and feel, and walk, and work, — these are not persons in him any more than they are in man. God is a spirit,

and cannot be anything else; and even if he was not, it would, by no means, follow that he was made up of different persons. He would still be one, the same as is man — one in spirit, and one in person.

Now, if the Bible stated that the *word* created all things, we might conclude, with the Trinitarian, that it was a distinct person in the Godhead. Or even if it declared that all things were made by it, and did not teach that they were made by so many other things, we might still be led to the same conclusion. But when it is said that *God* created all things, and that he is one; and when we are told that he did this by the word which he spake, and by his spirit, and with his hands; when we are told that he upholds all things with his mighty arm and by the word of his power — that he does all things by the councils of his will, and by the words of his mouth, and by the decrees of his mind, and the thoughts and desires of his heart; when he is said to work in so many different ways, and by so many different means, and then declares in one place that he has done all things by this member of his body, and in another by that, — the only conclusion to which we can come is, that he speaks as a man, because speaking *to men*, and that he uses these different expressions in describing his works the same as we would do in describing ours. There is not a place

in the Bible, as before stated, where it is declared that the word created anything. The uniform teachings of the Scriptures are that God is the creator of all things, and that he performed the work in the different ways we have already mentioned. Nor have we, therefore, any more evidence that his word is a distinct person than we have that his *mouth* is, or any other part of the body in which he is represented to dwell.

Having advanced thus far in the argument, we are now prepared to understand that part of the testimony of Paul which we promised to examine in this chapter. He states in Hebrews and in Colossians, as we have seen, that God created all things by his Son, and in Ephesians that he "created all things by Jesus Christ." We have also seen that in another place he ascribes this work to the *word* of the Lord, and that with this last statement agrees the testimony of a large number of other inspired writers. We have found other places, again, where it is said that the Deity created by his spirit, and by the breath of his mouth, and where the creation is declared to be the work of his hands, etc.

We come now to ask in what way we are to understand all these different expressions? We have shown that it will not do to conclude that they are so many different persons, because it would make a much larger

number than is even claimed by Trinitarians, and would also make the Scriptures contradict themselves. If the Son is in fact perfect Deity, and that one, too, by whom all things were made, and are now upheld, it cannot be that this same work was performed by other persons, who are as distinct from him as they are from each other. Nor can the Word, spoken of by John, if it is the second person in the Trinity, be the same word that is spoken of by other writers, since it is clear that they, by that term, do not mean a person, but simply the words spoken, or the acts performed, by the Creator. And yet they ascribe to these words of the Lord the same power and energy that John does to the Word of which he speaks, and declare that by them was performed the same works. Then, if their statements do not conflict, they are all speaking of the great work which the Lord our God had done; and have employed these different modes of expression, not for the purpose of showing that the Godhead was divided, but as they would use similar expressions in speaking of the works of man. Just as we speak of the spirit of a man by the energy which he displays, and the work which he performs, so they speak of the works of the spirit of God. And as we speak of a brave general, who is said to set his troops in motion, and to control vast armies by his word of command, so the Deity is said to have

spoken the universe into existence, and to uphold all things by the word of his power. Bonaparte, by his word, made monarchs tremble, and conquered nations. All Europe feared the words that proceeded out of his mouth, and was obedient to his commands. Lincoln, by his word, emancipated four millions of slaves, while Grant, by his word, concentrated our forces around Vicksburg and Richmond, disconcerted the plans of the confederate armies, and restored peace to our country. And as we thus speak of the acts of men, so do the Scriptures speak of the acts of God. But man is also said to work in other ways than by his word and his spirit. That which he is said to do by these is frequently declared to be the work of his hands, etc. So with God. He is said to work by his word, and by his spirit, and with his hands and feet, and heart and voice.

Now this word was in Christ, and this word was *God*. It was not a person distinct from God, but was God himself. That same awful being, who had spoken the heavens and the earth into existence, was now speaking to the world through his Son. For centuries he had spoken to men through his prophets. But they did not always have his word with them. They must wait for hours, and even days sometimes, before God would speak to them. The spirit of truth did not rest

upon them constantly, but "came" to them as occasion might require. With Christ this was not so. In him the Deity became incarnate. The word of the Lord did not "come" to him, but *dwelt* in him. The spirit of God was not given to him "by measure," but it "abode upon him." Hence John declares that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And as he tells us that the Word was God, because it proceeded from him, so Paul declares that it was the *Son* of God, because it dwelt in his Son.

The Deity who had revealed himself in creation, and by the inspiration of his prophets, was now making a still higher revelation of himself in Christ. And as he is said to have made his first revelation in different ways, and by different means, so, also, his last. The God who created all things, is the one who worked in Christ for the salvation of man; and as he is said to have performed his first works by his word, and by his spirit, and by the different members of the body which he is represented to have, so he employs the same terms to denote that by which he worked in his Son. Hence Christ speaks of his works as having been performed by the "finger of God," and "by the spirit of God," and also by the *words* which he spake. He silenced the winds, and calmed the raging sea, by simply commanding them to be still. By his word fevers were

rebuked, and evil spirits fled. His voice was heard at the grave of Lazarus, and at the ruler's house, and the dead came to life. Wherever he went he could control all things, we are told, by the word of his mouth. Hence the Centurion said it was not necessary that the Saviour should see his sick servant, but simply to speak the word and he would be healed. And yet it was not the word of Christ, nor his touch, nor his voice, nor anything else that the man did, or could do, that performed these miracles, but it was the Deity that dwelt in him. "I can of mine own self do nothing,"—"The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

The Father is the Deity who has been revealed to man. Not God *the absolute one*, about whom Mr. Bushnell speaks in his "God in Christ," and who, as he states, is now, and ever will be, unknown to us; but God so far as he *is* known — God so far as he has been or can be comprehended by finite beings,— this God is our Father, and the one who has revealed him to us is his Son. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." This Being is the Lord our God, and is absolutely but *one* Lord. He has created all things; he has redeemed man; he is the God who

was "in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." That by which he is said to have created and redeemed is no more a distinct person of himself, than is that by which a man is said to work, a person of the man. Whatever name is given to it — whether word, spirit, mind, heart, or anything else, — it is no more a person in Deity, than it would be in us. "There is but one God the Father;" "One God and Father of all," and this one dwelt in Christ, and through him revealed his word. To him "God giveth not his spirit by measure," but in him dwelt in all his fullness.

There are more than two hundred places in the Bible where the word of the Lord is spoken of. Sometimes it is called the "word of God," and at other times "the word of the Lord." Sometimes it is said to be the word that "came from," or was spoken by him, or the word which had "proceeded from," or had "gone out of," his mouth. Sometimes other modes of expression are used; but in every instance it is clear that the writer means by it the same as when he speaks of the words of Moses, or of Samuel, or of any other man. So, also, when they speak of the Spirit of God, it is evident from the connection that they mean the same as when they speak of the spirit of a man. And not only so, but they describe what God does by his Word and his Spirit, the same as they do what man

does by his word and his spirit. But are the word and the spirit of man two different persons? Do we say that there are three persons in one man? And, again, what is the spirit of a man? Is it not his mind, and that which proceeds from it? or, in other words, is it not the mind in action — that which it does by means of the body in which it dwells, and with which it is so mysteriously united? And if so, then what is the spirit of God, but the mind of God exerting itself — the Deity in action.

Does John say that the "Word was God"? So Christ teaches that the Spirit is God. "God is a Spirit," he declares, and the Spirit, therefore, *must* be God. It is not some other person, but is the very God himself. And as he is a Spirit, and cannot be anything but a Spirit; so the Spirit is God, and cannot possibly be anything but God. And as this Spirit dwelt in Christ, and spake and worked through him, John, therefore, tells us plainly that it was God. He does not mean some other Deity, because he declares there is no other; but the same one who had spoken in times past by the prophets, and who would now reveal himself to the world through his Son Christ Jesus.

But as we shall discuss this part of the subject more fully when we come to speak of the Holy Spirit,

we will not pursue this last thought any farther at present. If any one should not be satisfied with the answer we have just given as to what the *Spirit* is, let him call it something else; it would still be no more a person distinct from God, than is the spirit of man a distinct person of the man; and the same is true of his word. The word and the spirit by which God worked in creation, are the same as that by which he worked in his Son. Hence Christ is said to have been "full of the Spirit," and to have had within him the word which he proclaimed. By God's spirit he cast out devils, and by his Word he raised the dead. Shall we then conclude that they are two different persons? If the Bible teaches that God is a Spirit, so it declares that God is *light*, and that God is *love;* and as well might the last two be called persons of the Deity as the first. Then there is the Bible itself, which is called the Word of God. Will it not judge us at the great day? Does not Christ say it is *spirit*, and it is *life?* Is it not said to search our hearts, and to discern our thoughts? and does not Paul declare that the gospel is the "power of God unto salvation"? Surely it is spoken of as a living and distinct person, and should be so regarded if the rest are.

In this way we might go on, calling one a person here, and another a person there, until we had almost

any indefinite number, and would, in fact, have no Deity at all. Like the heathen, we would have one that we called supreme, and a large number of other inferior deities, and might in reality be said to be without God in the world or anywhere else. Making so many divisions in the Godhead, and calling each one the Deity, would be like dividing the human body into so many different parts, and calling each one a man. And as such a process would take the life of the man, so it would also destroy the existence of God, and leave the universe without a creator. We, therefore, conclude that God is one, as he himself declares, and that his Word and his Spirit are no more different and distinct persons than are the word and the spirit of man.

Having explained what we understand by the Word, as spoken of in the first chapter of John's gospel, there is but little else in his testimony to which we shall call attention. He has given us a great many interesting and important facts, concerning the person and character of the Son, and his relation to the Father; but as most of them are also given by Christ and Paul, whose testimony we have already examined, we do not deem it necessary to refer to them here again.

He states the object which he had in writing his

gospel in these words: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son of God*, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." He declares, as do the Saviour and Paul, that the Father is God; that he is not only our Father and our God, but that he is also the God and Father of Christ; that the Son is the light of the world, and the life of man; that he suffered and died, and was raised from the dead by the power of God; that he is now our advocate with the Father, and that through him we may have salvation from sin, the gift of God's spirit, and eternal life in heaven.

We give a few passages, to show how clearly he sets forth these facts, and how perfectly he agrees with other writers. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us; because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."[1] "This is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."[2] Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and

[1] 1 John 4:9, 10, 15. [2] 1 Jo. 5:9, 11.

with his Son Jesus Christ." "God is light . . . if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ *his Son*, cleanseth us from all sin."[1] "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."[2] "Grace be with you, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father."[3] "Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father."[4]

From these passages, and others which might be given, it is clear that he not only calls the Father God, but that he uses these terms interchangeably, as though they were entirely synonymous. Our Father is the Son's Father, and our God is his Father. The Son of God is the Son of the Father. The eternal life which God hath given unto us, and which is declared to be in his Son, is the "life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." The Son hath redeemed us unto God and *his* Father, hath made us kings and

[1] 1 John 1 : 3, 5, 7. [2] Jo. 2 : 1. [3] 2 Jo. 1 : 3. [4] Rev. 1 : 4-6.

priests unto *our* God, and will make him that overcometh a pillar in the temple of *his* God. We have all then one common Father, and that one is God.

There is one passage in the first epistle of John, which we ought, perhaps, at least to notice. It reads: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one (1 John 5 : 7). This is the only place in his writing, and the only one in the Bible, we think, from which we could infer the doctrine of the Trinity. Doctor Adam Clark, though a conscientious believer in the doctrine itself, does not think the passage is genuine. In his notes upon this text, he says: "But it is likely this verse is not genuine. It is wanting in every manuscript of this epistle, written before the invention of printing, one excepted, the Codex Montfortii, in Trinity College, Dublin. The others which omit this verse amount to one hundred and twelve. It is wanting in both the Syriac, all the Arabic, Æthiopic, the Coptic, Sahidic, Slavonian, etc.; in a word, in all the ancient versions, but the Vulgate; and even of this version, many of *the most ancient and correct* manuscripts have it not. It is wanting also in all the ancient Greek fathers, and in most even of the Latin." A little farther along he states again: "Though a conscientious advocate for the sacred doctrine contained in

this disputed text, and which I think expressly enough revealed in several other parts of the sacred writings, I must own the passage in question *stands on a most dubious foundation.* All the Greek manuscripts (the Codex Montfortii alone excepted) omit the passage; so do all the ancient versions, the Vulgate excepted; but in many of the ancient manuscripts even of this version it is wanting. There is one in the British Museum, of the tenth or eleventh century, where it is added by a more recent hand, in the margin; for it is wanting in the text." (Clark's Commentaries, vol. 6.) Then he goes on to give us the names of some fifty of the most celebrated of the Greek and Latin fathers, who have never quoted this verse, though many of them were writing in defense of the very doctrine which it is claimed to teach. Doctor Dodd, Coverdale, and Tindal, all agree with Doctor Clark.

This verse "is wanting," says the same writer, "in the first edition of Erasmus, A. D. 1516, which is properly the *editio princeps* of the Greek text. It is wanting also in his second edition, 1519, but he added it in the third, from the Codex Montfortii. It is wanting in the edition of Aldus, Gerbelleus, Cephalæus, etc. It is wanting in the German translation of Luther, and in all the editions of it published during his lifetime. It is inserted in our early English translations, but

with marks of doubtfulness. In short, it stands on no authority sufficient to authenticate any part of a revelation professing to have come from God."

So says one of the most learned and conscientious commentators of modern times, and with him agree, as he has shown, the ablest and most reliable of even orthodox writers in every age. One hundred and thirteen Greek manuscripts containing the first epistle of John, and this verse omitted in *one hundred and twelve!* In only one of that vast number was it to be found, and that one a manuscript of comparatively recent date. Neither is it in any of the ancient versions, the Vulgate excepted; and even in the most ancient and correct copies of this it is wanting. It is not strange, then, that the ancient fathers say so little about it, or that so many modern Trinitarians regard it as not genuine.

But even if it is genuine, would it prove the doctrine which is claimed? If the Word of God is said to search the heart, and to discern the thoughts, and is that by which we are to be judged, might it not also be said to bear record? Does not Christ expressly declare (John 12:48) that he will judge no man, but that the words which he has spoken, the same will judge us at the last day? Does he not say that his works are witnesses of him, and that Moses will be

a witness against his enemies in the great day? Then does this prove that Moses is God, or that the words and works of Christ are persons? And if not, would it any more follow that the word and the spirit spoken of in this verse are persons, because they are also declared to be witnesses? John does not state that they are persons, but that they *bear record;* and this the Bible is declared to do in a number of places. And further, it is stated in the very next verse that there are three that bear witness on earth, the spirit, the water and the blood; and if the three in heaven are persons because they bear record, so are the three on earth. Indeed, one of the witnesses in heaven is also declared to be one of the three on earth, and if a divine person in the one, it must be in the other. This would make *five* in all: the Father and the word in heaven, the water and the blood on earth, and the spirit which is common to both. Now, admitting the seventh verse to be genuine, what evidence have we that the last two witnesses mentioned in that verse are persons of the Godhead, any more than we have that the last two are, which are mentioned in the eighth verse? And what reason have we for believing that any of them are persons, any more than we have that the words and works of Christ are persons, or a great many other things which we have already no-

ticed? Are they not all spoken of as living and intelligent beings, and are they not all declared to be witnesses?

We do not believe that the seventh verse was written by John. We have other reasons beside those we have mentioned for rejecting it. But even if he *did* write it, we deny that it proves the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in one God. We submit to any unprejudiced mind, whether the evidence which this passage furnishes, in proof that the word and the spirit of God are persons, is any stronger than the evidence which we have that the word and the spirit of man are persons. We deny that it is any stronger than the evidence which we have that the words and works of Christ are persons, or even the water and the blood spoken of in the following verse. And yet this one passage, standing, as is admitted, upon "a most dubious foundation," and furnishing, even if true, so slender a proof of the doctrine claimed — this one passage is all that there is in the writings of John upon which Trinitarians have to rely, and which many of them admit to be the strongest evidence they have in the Word of God. The very fact that this verse has been received into our translation, and has been brought forward with so much zeal and earnestness, as though everything depended upon it, is a proof that

Trinitarians feel how little foundation they have from Scripture for their doctrine, and how important it is that they use whatever they may find to the best possible advantage. If we were to reject as untrue more than twenty different passages which declare that God is one, and that he is the Father, there would still be left an amount of Scripture testimony sufficient to prove it beyond the possibility of a doubt. There would be numerous other places where the same great truth is set forth, and in language, too, so plain that no one could misunderstand it. But is this true with the doctrine of the Trinitarian? Is there a solitary place where it is declared that there are three persons, each one of whom is God? Does John state, even in this disputed text, that the three who bear record in heaven are persons, or is there anything in the language used from which we must infer that he *meant* to teach this doctrine? And yet this is the only place in the Bible where the word *three* is mentioned as in any way connected with Deity, so that we could possibly infer from it that such a doctrine was implied.

We conclude, then, that the testimony of John is not sufficient to prove a Trinity of *Gods*, or, what amounts to the same thing, a Trinity of persons, each one of whom is singly a perfect and entire Deity. We have seen all that he has said which is regarded as

favorable to this view. We have found that he does not anywhere speak of a Son begotten from eternity, nor of a Godhead in which are three persons. On the contrary, we have found that he speaks of God as one, and expressly declares that one to be the Father. This one Supreme Being, he tells us, is a God of infinite compassion, and has provided life and salvation for every member of the human family. The love of God our Father, and eternal life through Jesus Christ his Son, are the two leading thoughts in all his writings. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

CHAPTER V.

TESTIMONY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

WE have examined the testimony of the most important witness — the Lord Jesus Christ. We have also considered the testimony of the two next most important — Paul and John. In comparison with the last two, the other writers of the New Testament have said but little which bears directly upon this question. We do not know of anything in either the epistles of Peter, or James, or Jude, which is regarded as specially favorable to the views of the Trinitarian, though there are a number of places in which they certainly teach that such views cannot be correct. In the first three gospels, the most that we have upon this subject is the testimony of Christ himself. What little these writers have given, as their own separate testimony, will be considered when we come to speak of the only-begotten Son, and also in the chapter on the Holy Spirit. The three witnesses already exam-

ined, then, are the ones who have said most upon this subject, and it is to their evidence that Trinitarians especially refer when discussing it. So far as the New Testament is concerned, at least, there is but little else upon which they rely.

We, therefore, pass to consider the evidence which is furnished in the Old Testament Scriptures. We will try to ascertain whether there is anything in their teachings which would lead us to believe that God had a Son who was begotten from eternity, or that in the Godhead there are three persons.

We begin by calling attention to the fact that they declare God to be *one*. Their uniform testimony is this: "The Lord our God is one Lord."[1] "Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth."[2] "Thou art God alone."[3] "Thou whose name alone is Jehovah."[4] "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."[5] "I am God, and there is none else."[6] "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."[7] "Beside me there is no God."[8] "There is no God else beside me."[9]

In this way do they all speak, and never in any other. And if in this one Deity there are three persons, or if he has a Son who is eternal, they have never

[1] Deut. 6 : 4. [2] 2 Kings 19 : 15. [3] Ps. 86 : 10. [4] Ps. 83 : 18. [5] Isa. 44 : 8. [6] Isa. 45 : 22. [7] Isa. 43 : 10. [8] Isa. 44 : 6. [9] Isa. 45 : 21.

informed us. If such a doctrine is true, they certainly did not know it, because they speak of his unity in such a way as clearly shows that they did not believe there was in it a Trinity.

But they teach, further, that this one God is our Saviour and Redeemer, and that he is the one who would become incarnate, and who should be called the Holy One of Israel. The one Jehovah, who created the heavens, is the one, they declare, who would also redeem man, and beside whom there is no Saviour. He was to dwell in Christ, and was not, according to their teachings, the *Son* of God, but was to be the everlasting Jehovah himself; and as the settlement of this question is that upon which everything else depends, we will give the testimony somewhat at length. "I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." . . . "For thy maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall he be called."[1] "God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer."[2] "Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "Thus saith the Lord, the king of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God." "Thus saith the Lord,

[1] Isa. 41 : 14 ; 54 : 5. [2] Ps. 78 : 35.

thy Redeemer . . . I am the Lord that maketh all things."[1] "As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel." "I, the Lord, am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob." "Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting." "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord."[2] "Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his name."[3] "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." "I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour." "Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." "There is no God else beside me; a just God, and a Saviour; there is none beside me. . . . For I am God, and there is none else."[4] "Yet I am the Lord thy God. . . . There is no Saviour beside me."[5] "Let Israel hope in the Lord [Jehovah]; for with the Lord [Jehovah] there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."[6] "But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord [Jehovah] thy Redeemer."[7] "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord [Jehovah].

[1] Isa. 43 : 14 ; 44 : 6, 24. [2] Isa. 47 : 4 ; 49 : 26 ; 63 : 16 ; 59 : 20. [3] Jer. 50 : 34.
[4] Isa. 43 : 3, 11 ; 45 : 15, 21, 22. [5] Hos. 13 : 4. [6] Ps. 130 : 7, 8. [7] Isa. 54 : 8.

And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people."[1] "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch. . . . And this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord [Jehovah] our Righteousness."[2] "It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him and he will save us; this is the Lord [Jehovah], we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."[3] "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord [Jehovah]; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."[4]

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."[5]

The Deity who was to dwell in Christ, then, was not God's Son, but was God himself. He is not called the eternal Son, but is declared to be the *everlasting Father*. The one God who made the heavens was to become the Redeemer of man, and is our *only* Saviour. In this way, in more than a score of places, it is most solemnly declared that the Jehovah of the Old Testament, is to be the Lord and Redeemer of the New, and that beside him there is none else. Then does

[1] Zech. 2 : 10, 11. [2] Jer. 23 : 5, 6. [3] Isa. 25 : 9. [4] Isa. 40 : 3. [5] Isa. 9 : 6.

not this settle the question forever? Can we say that it was only one person of the Deity that became incarnate, when these Scriptures teach that it was the Deity *entire?* and can we say that there are three, when they speak of but one, and assert so many times that there is no other? And besides, how dare we say that the divinity of Christ is God the *Son*, when they, in so many words, declare that it was the Father. The statement made by Isaiah, in the last passage we quoted, would completely overthrow the doctrine of the Trinitarian, if there were no others. That the prophet there refers to the Lord Jesus Christ is admitted by all. Then why does he say that he shall be called the "Mighty God, the Everlasting Father"? If the Deity in Christ was the eternal Son, why does the prophet not say so? or if he was mistaken, why has not some other inspired writer contradicted him? Why is it that no one of them has ever said that God had a Son, who existed from eternity, and that he is the one who became incarnate? And since Isaiah tells us that it is the Father, and that he is our only Saviour; and since the other writers of the Bible have never contradicted his statement, but have said so much to corroborate its truth — are we not bound to accept his testimony, and to believe the Word of God, rather than the opinions of man?

We ask the reader if he has ever seen stronger testimony brought forward to prove any doctrine of the Bible, than we have just given in the question before us. The passages are not few in number, but are numerous; neither is the language obscure, but clear and positive. God is our Father, and our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, our Saviour. He is the Redeemer who was to come to Zion, and should dwell in the midst of his people; the one of whom it should be said in that day, "Lo, this is our God." The one for whom a highway should be prepared in the desert, and the messenger of the New Covenant, who should suddenly make his appearance, and who should be called *Jehovah our Righteousness.* Beside him there is none else.

Doctor Richard Watson has given us, in his Institutes, some very fine arguments in proof of the divinity of Christ. He shows very conclusively that the Deity in him was the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and that divine titles and divine attributes are ascribed to him, etc. In doing this he has demonstrated that the God spoken of by the prophets, and the God who was in Christ, are not two different and distinct persons, as he claims them to be, but are one and the same identical Being. For if he is indeed Jehovah, as this writer so clearly proves that he is, what can be more

certain than that he is not his Son? and that if he is the same Jehovah, he cannot be some other one? If there *is* but one, and he dwelt in Christ, and is declared to be the Lord God, our only Saviour and Redeemer, can there be another?

Mr. Watson tells us that the Jehovah who appeared in the form of an angel to Abraham, and to Moses, and to others, and who, he says, was the same person that afterward made his appearance in the flesh — that this person was not the Father. He thinks he was most certainly God, and was the one who became the Saviour of the world, and yet he undertakes to show that he could not be the Father, and, therefore, concludes that he must have been God the Son. But with due deference to his good judgment, and respect for his honest opinions, let us look at the facts. What do the Scriptures most positively teach? Isaiah declares that this same Jehovah *is* our Father and our Redeemer. "Thou, O Lord, art our *Father*, our *Redeemer;* thy name is from everlasting,"—"But now, O Lord, thou art our Father."[1] — "Doubtless thou art our *Father*, though Abraham be ignorant of us."— "He shall be called . . . the *everlasting Father*." In three different places he thus declares that God is our Father, and in two of them he states that he is also our Saviour.

[1] Isa. 64 : 8.

The Psalmist declares that God is his Father, and the rock of his salvation (Ps. 89 : 26). He also states that the same one is our Redeemer. God is called a Father to Solomon (2 Sam. 7 : 14). In 1 Chron. 29 : 10, we are told that the Lord God of Israel, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob — the one who was with his people, and directed them in all their journeys — that this one is the "Lord God of Israel, *our Father*, forever and ever." Jeremiah declares (31 : 9) that the same one is a Father to Israel; while Malachi states (2 : 10) that one God has created us, and that he is our Father. The same Jehovah that revealed himself to his ancient people, through his angel, and who is said to have revealed himself, afterwards, through his Son, is in a number of other places called our Father, but in *no one* place is he ever called God the Son.

Now, in the face of all this testimony, what do the opinions of any man amount to? If the Redeemer of Israel, and the Saviour of the world is God the Son, where is the evidence? If he is the Son, why is he called the Father? If there is but one, and he is our King and Redeemer, how can we conclude that there are two? And if the one who has redeemed us is declared to be our Father, how can we possibly say that it was his Son? Did Christ ever teach that the

Son of God was our Father? or has anyone ever claimed that he sustained to us that relation? And if not, then, shall we insist, contrary to these plain teachings of the Word of God, that the Deity who redeemed us is the Son? or shall we conclude, with the Bible, that the God who redeemed us is one, and that one is our Father?

There are other passages in the Old Testament, where this same truth is very clearly set forth, and to which we might refer if it was necessary, but as we deem that which we have already given amply sufficient, and as we especially desire to notice any testimony which there may seem to be on the opposite side, we will pass over these, and proceed to examine some passages which are regarded as favorable to the doctrine of the Trinitarian.

We state, in advance, that there is not a place where they teach that there are three divine persons, or a single one where we think such a doctrine could even be inferred. But as there are great and good men who believe that there are places where this doctrine, if not expressed, is, at least, very clearly implied; and as it is a matter of very great importance, that, on such a question, we should ascertain, if possible, the truth, we will therefore call attention to the very passages upon which they most rely.

The Hebrew names of God have in several cases, we are told, plural forms. This is the first argument that is usually brought forward to prove a Trinity. One of the names of the Supreme Being, at least, is said to be in the plural number very frequently, though it is the nominative case to a verb singular. The first verse in the Bible, Hebrew scholars tell us, should read thus: "In the beginning *Gods* created the heavens and the earth." The word *Elohim* (God) is plural, while the word *bara* (he created) is singular. In other places the name of the Deity is singular, but is joined to a verb plural; while in a much larger number of places, both the noun and the verb are singular.

But if the name of Jehovah is sometimes plural, why is it not always so? and when it is in the plural number, why is not the verb plural also? Why do we have a plural noun joined to a verb singular, and then a verb plural agreeing with a noun singular, and then numerous passages, again, where both are singular? If the noun and the verb are never both plural, and if there are more places where they are both singular, than there are places where either of them are plural — what does this argument amount to? If the word *Jehovah* is singular in form, while the word which we translate *God* is sometimes plural, which shall we believe is true? Shall we conclude that there

is only *one* Supreme Being, or that there are more than one? This is the only question there is left us to determine, for if there is any force whatever in this argument, it proves the very thing which the Trinitarian denies, viz.: that there exists a plurality of Gods. It should read, they say, that "*Gods* created," not *persons;* and whether there is *one* person or *three*, we have not the slightest evidence from these different names of Deity. It is not the number of persons in one Godhead that is spoken of, but the *number of Gods* who were engaged in the work of creation. Neither would it prove that there are only three Deities, for if the noun is in fact plural, and if we must conclude from it that there is a plurality, it would no more follow that the number is three, than that it is thirty.

The only question, then, is, whether we have one Jehovah or more than one; whether the Lord our God is one Lord, or whether he is not. If we take the answer which God himself has given, we shall conclude that there is absolutely but one; while if we take the plural form of some of the appellations that are given to him, with the construction which men have put upon them, and the inferences which they have drawn from them, we may conclude there are any number whatever.

And, beside, is it not strange, if there is in these names of Deity any evidence of a Trinity, that the Hebrews themselves did not believe in it? Certainly they were more familiar with their own language than we can possibly be. It was not only, then, a living language, but was their own native tongue. It was that which they spake and wrote, and of which they had a more perfect knowledge, than any other people could have. Then why is it that they neither believed in a plurality of persons, or of Deities? Why is it that they never even thought that such a thing could be possible, but taught so clearly that there is only one, and that there could be no other? If the names of Jehovah did not shake their belief in one Supreme Being, should it disturb us? If the many solemn declarations which God made as to his absolute unity were sufficient to satisfy them — though surrounded by nations who believed in and worshiped numberless Deities,— should it not satisfy us? And if the Trinitarian replies that he does not question the unity of God, then he has himself admitted that there is no validity in his own argument; for this is the only question that is here involved. It is not whether there are three persons in one Deity — this does in no way enter into the question, because not one word is said about it; but the question is whether God or *Gods*

created the heavens — whether there is one, or whether there are many — this is the important and the *only* question, and to this the uniform answer is — "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah."

But there are also other plural forms of speech, in connection with Deity, which are thought to be evidences of a Trinity. "God said, Let us make man." "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become like one of us." "And the Lord said, Let us go down."

It is thought that such expressions, if they do not prove a Trinity, are at least very strong evidences of a plurality. But if this is true, it proves again the very thing which the Trinitarian denies. It clearly shows, if anything, a plurality, not of persons, but of Gods. The Deity, let it be remembered, is the person speaking. He said, "Let us make man," etc., and if those to whom he spoke are also divine beings, it simply proves that there are more than one. It is no evidence that there are three persons in one Deity, or that there are only three Deities, but that there is one who was the speaker, and others to whom he was speaking. It is the Deity entire who is here talking; not the one who is supposed to be the first person in the Trinity, or the Son, who is called the second, but it was *God* who spake — that awful Being who stretched out the

heavens, and by whose word all things came into existence — he is the one who said this, and if he was not speaking to himself, we must either admit that there is more than one Supreme Being, or else conclude that those he addressed were created beings. In any event, there is nothing in these expressions from which we could possibly infer the doctrine of the Trinity. It does not touch the question of the number of persons in the Godhead, but the question as to the number of Gods there are in existence; and viewed even from this standpoint, it has but little weight if any whatever.

We see nothing very unreasonable in supposing that the Deity is here speaking of himself, as is common with men when speaking of themselves; that as it is common and proper for a man when speaking or writing to say, "*We* will call attention to this point next," or "Let *us* now examine such and such evidence;" so God, with equal propriety, might use similar forms of expression when speaking of his works. And, indeed, there is scarcely ever a discourse delivered, or a book written, in which we have not much stronger evidence that there is a Trinity of persons in man, than we have from the Bible that there is a Trinity in God.

Neither is there anything unreasonable, again, in

supposing that the Creator was here speaking to angels. It is certain that they have assisted him in many of the works of his hands, and in publishing some of the most wonderful revelations of his grace and truth. They are all declared to be "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Long before man was created, when the morning stars sang together, they were the Sons of God who shouted for joy. In all the dispensations of God's providence, and in all the revelations which he made to his ancient people, they were constantly employed, and took the deepest interest. When the star of Bethlehem arose, and was shining in its beauty and brilliancy about the only begotten Son of God, they were crowding in multitudes around the scene, and exclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." They were present with our Lord in the hour of his deepest and severest suffering; were with him at the time of his resurrection from the dead, and of his ascension into heaven, and assisted in all that was afterward done in spreading a knowledge of his salvation over the world. That they were present, then, at the creation of man, is not only probable, but almost certain; and that they may have been addressed in language such as the above, is therefore by no means unreasonable.

And yet we do not insist that any one shall accept either of these explanations if he can possibly find any better. If neither of them should be satisfactory to the Trinitarian, let him tell who it was the Deity *did* speak to. It is certain that if God addressed any one at all beside himself, the persons so addressed were not divine beings; because the only Supremely Divine Being in existence is the one who was speaking. If we are honest in saying that we believe in only one Deity, let us explain these passages as best we can, but let us never attempt to draw a conclusion from them which does not follow, and which could not be drawn by any kind of fair construction that we can possibly put upon them.

If the Hebrew names of Deity are sometimes singular and sometimes plural, the truth is that we could not infer from this fact anything whatever. We should know that one or the other was not correct, and should have to decide from the general teachings of the Scriptures which one was true. If we were in doubt whether there was one, or more than one, we should have to ask ourselves, Which does the Deity himself say is correct? Does he teach that there is one Supreme Being, or more than one? Does he answer this in language which cannot be misunderstood, or has he left it doubtful? If there are a few places where the

name is plural, there are a great many more where it is singular. If, in a very few places, we have the pronouns *us* and *they*, there are numberless cases where we have the singular pronouns *I*, *thou* and *he*. God, almost invariably, speaks of himself in the singular number; and, in the same way, do all the inspired writers speak of him. And, lest this might not be sufficient to convince us that there is but one, he has most positively and solemnly declared it throughout every part of his Word. He has not only said that it is so, but demands that we shall *believe* it. He has laid it down in the first and great commandment, as a truth which his people are to acknowledge forever.

Shall we, then, accept it as true? Shall we conclude — for this is the only question — that there is one, or that there are many? If we believe, in our hearts, what we confess with our lips, the question is settled; if we do not, then that in which we are bound to believe, is, not a Trinity of persons, but a plurality of Gods.

The form of benediction used by the Jewish priests in blessing Israel, is also thought to be another evidence of the Trinity. It is given in Numbers 6: 24–27 —

"Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee:
Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:
Jehovah lift his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

When men with the learning and the ability of Mr. Watson, and others, are compelled to rely upon such evidence as this, to prove their doctrine, it certainly shows, at least, how sensible they are that they must use whatever Scripture they can find, in any way favorable to their view, to the best possible advantage. But is there here any evidence at all of the doctrine claimed? It is true that the word *Jehovah* is mentioned three times; but did Mr. Watson believe there were *three* Jehovahs? He has told us before that there was only one, and has most clearly proven it from the Scriptures. Then, what does he seek to do? Surely, not to prove that there were three persons, and only one God. This question has as little to do with the passage before us, as it has with every other one that we have considered. It is not even mentioned, nor have we the slightest evidence that such a thought ever entered the mind of the writer. If the Jehovah mentioned in each one of these sentences is a different person from those mentioned in the other two, it simply proves that we have three Supreme Beings, and have been mistaken in thinking there was but one. But there is not here any proof even of this. When the Lord revealed unto Moses his glory; when he passed before him and proclaimed the name of "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-

suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty;"—have we not here evidence of a plurality equally as clear as in the Jewish benediction? Does not the Deity here declare that he is Jehovah, the mighty God, the *merciful* Being, the God who is *gracious*, and *long-suffering*, and infinite in *goodness* and *justice* and *truth?* Now, if, in the one place, we have evidence of three different persons or Deities, have we not as good evidence, in the other, of at least ten or eleven? If the Lord blesses, and keeps, and illuminates, and gives peace, in the first, is he not said to do even more than this in the last? Then, why should we conclude that we have given us, in the one, the acts of three different Jehovahs, and, in the other, the different attributes of the same Jehovah? The truth is that we have no evidence of more than one Deity in either case, much less of the doctrine of the Trinity.

But we pass from this to consider next the celebrated vision of Isaiah, which is regarded by Trinitarians as another proof of their doctrine. The prophet states that he saw the Lord seated upon a throne, and that his train filled the temple. Above it were seraphim, each having six wings. One of these cried to the

other, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." It is thought that, because the seraphim repeated the word *holy* three times, that they were addressing three equally divine persons, and that the use of the pronoun *us* afterward, together with the place where this scene transpired, makes the proof still stronger. But if there is any evidence here of a Trinity, we have never been able to see it. It certainly seems to us that, if the seraphim addressed three divine persons, instead of reading "Holy *is* the Lord of hosts," it should read, "Holy *are* the *Lords* of hosts;" and that, instead of saying, "the whole earth is full of *his* glory," it should read, "the whole earth is full of *their* glory." If the number is plural, we cannot see why both the pronoun and the verb should be singular. We should have a right to claim that one or the other must, at least, be plural, on the very ground that is taken by Trinitarians themselves, in the passages we have just gone over.

But, aside from this, we have evidence, conclusive, that the number addressed was not three, but *one*, and will give Mr. Watson's own argument to prove it. He states that in the phrase, "the Lord of Hosts," all admit that the Father is included. He next shows from John's gospel (12:41), that Christ, as to his di-

vinity, was also present. Then he proves very clearly from Paul (Acts 28:25), that this same Lord of Hosts was the Holy Ghost: "Well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive." "These words," says Mr. Watson, "quoted from Isaiah, the apostle Paul declares to have been spoken by the Holy Ghost, and Isaiah declares them to have been spoken on this very occasion by the Lord of Hosts." (Watson's Institutes, vol. 1, p. 471.) We admit every word of it. But what does this prove? — that they were different persons, or one and the same? If the one who spake to Isaiah is the Lord of Hosts, and if the same one is declared by Paul to be the Holy Ghost, then there cannot be any larger number of persons in the one than there is in the other. If in the one spoken of by the prophet there are three, there must also be in the one spoken of by Paul — three persons in the Lord of Hosts, and three persons in the Holy Ghost. Then if the Deity in Christ was also present, as is claimed, and as we admit, and is a person distinct from the Father, who is also admitted to be present, and if both these are persons as distinct from the Holy Ghost as they are from each other, how many persons would that make in all? Shall we say *five*, or *nine?* But if

the Lord of Hosts and the Holy Ghost are declared to be one and the same Being, and if God the Father and the God in Christ are not the same but different persons from the Holy Ghost, then neither of the first two could be present. But it is admitted that the Father was present, and also the Deity in Christ, and, beside this, the Scriptures teach it. What have we, then, but the most conclusive evidence that there is but one God, and that in the Godhead there is but one person. All the prophets declare that the "Lord of Hosts" is our Father and our Saviour. John declares that this same person is our Lord Jesus Christ; while Paul testifies that he was the Holy Ghost. But if the Deity in Christ is our Father, he cannot be his Son; neither can the Holy Ghost, if he is declared to be the Lord of Hosts, be a person distinct from him. And, hence, while Trinitarians have proven, by these passages, the Deity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, they have, at the same time, proven that their views of the Trinity are not correct. A stronger argument to prove that there is but one person could not be given.

Those who have been taught to believe in three persons, and who have never examined the evidence which there is to sustain such a view, will certainly be surprised when we tell them that we have now noticed the principal arguments that are usually brought for-

ward from the Old Testament in proof of this doctrine. There are a few other passages which are sometimes referred to, but those we have just considered are regarded as the most important.

The arguments of Mr. Watson, for the divinity of Christ, are as fine as we have seen anywhere. He has clearly shown that there was in him the divine nature as well as the human. But, in reading, we found that while he had said so much upon this subject, he had said but little in direct proof of the Trinity. We found, afterward, that other writers had pursued about the same course, arguing the Deity of our Lord at great length, as if upon this everything else depended. One passage after another would be brought forward as an evidence of this important doctrine, together with the opinions of the great and good of every age, and yet but very little was said to prove that the Deity in Christ was a person distinct from the one whom they declared to be his Father. Believing, as they did, that there were three, and having been taught that a denial of the Trinity involved a denial of Christ's divinity, they directed all their energies to the proof of this last point, as though upon it every other question rested.

Still, it seemed strange, at first, that a doctrine so incomprehensible as that of a Trinity in Unity, and

which they admitted could not be believed except on the authority of God's Word — why a doctrine which appeared so unreasonable, should not be shown to be very Scriptural, at least, and why our standard writers did not undertake to prove this as the first and most important question. Why this was so we could not at first understand. But when we came to examine the teachings of the Bible on this subject for ourselves, we found the reason why more and better testimony had not been given, was because *it could not be had*, and that all the evidence there was had been used to the very best advantage. We found that God said nothing about the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ, or of a Trinity of persons united in one Godhead from eternity, but that he had most clearly and uniformly contradicted it throughout every part of his revelation. We found a few passages which were regarded as favorable to such a doctrine, while the great mass of the testimony, to which Trinitarians had scarcely ever even alluded, most clearly showed that it could not be true.

And now, having examined this evidence; having noticed the strongest that there is in the Old Testament, both for and against this doctrine — what conclusion shall we draw from it as a whole? We have seen that the prophets speak of but one God, and that

they call him our Father; that this one Jehovah, they declare, will become incarnate, and that he is our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; that he is not only our Lord and King, but that he is our *only* Saviour; that beside him there neither is nor can be any other; that we are not simply taught this in a few places, but in many; that it is the uniform teaching of all these inspired writers, and that they have expressed it in terms the clearest and most positive. We have found that they stated this truth with the greatest solemnity, and have guarded it, as Mr. Watson admits, by precepts, by promises, and by the most terrible threatenings and punishments.

We have not found, on the other side, a solitary passage where it was declared that we have more than one Jehovah, or where it is said that this one was not our Redeemer. Neither is there a place where we are told that God has an eternal Son, or where it is said that there are three equally divine persons.

Not a word is said about the doctrine of the Trinity, nor is it even intimated that there is in the Godhead a plurality of persons. Not one of all the statements made as to the absolute unity of God, and as to the fact that he is our only Saviour — not one is ever denied in any part of these sacred writings. Some of the names of Deity have plural forms, from which we

might infer that there was more than one Supreme Being, if God had not himself told us that there was but one.

Then where is the evidence of a Trinity? what is there to destroy the force of the testimony which the Scriptures themselves bring forward against this doctrine? The evidence for one God — one not only in essence, but one also in person — is stronger than is the evidence for almost any other doctrine that is taught in the Bible. The witnesses are more numerous, and they have stated it more clearly, than almost any other truth about which they have testified. Why, then, may we not believe it? Is there anything in the form of the Jewish benediction, or in the vision of Isaiah, or in any other place, which would, in any way, invalidate the solemn testimony of so many men inspired of God? In the passages brought forward by Trinitarians, is there anything said concerning the persons in the Godhead, or of the birth of a Son who always existed, and who, therefore, never could have been born? Is there a single place where either of these dogmas are implied, or where we should have any reason to infer that they might be true? And if there is not — if there is no evidence of a Trinity, or of a Deity who had an eternal Son, and another Deity who had a Father, and still another who had neither,

— if such a doctrine is neither expressed nor implied, on whose authority do we believe it to be true? And if it is contrary both to reason and revelation, should we not reject it at once and forever?

We might have introduced other evidence from the Old Testament to sustain our view of the subject, but as that which we have given is so clear and satisfactory, and as we have not found anything which would seem to lead us to a different conclusion, we do not deem it necessary. So we might have taken each of the passages we have quoted, and have shown how clearly the same great truth is set forth in all of them. But when God has himself declared a thing in such plain and unequivocal language; when he has repeated it at so many different times, and by so many different persons; when we find it to be one of the first and most important truths revealed to us in the morning of our existence, and, coming down the ages of forty centuries, is that with which he closes his revelation to man; when he has himself furnished such evidence, and we have produced so great a portion of it, at least, what more is necessary?

When a man has but little evidence to sustain him in his views, and that, too, it may be, of a doubtful character, he will show it off to the best advantage. Like the merchant whose stock of goods has run low,

and who, the more his drawers and shelves become empty, makes the greater display of what is left; so with many who have but little authority from the Word of God for their opinions. They search the volume of Inspiration for scraps of evidence, where there is as little to be found as there is of life and vegetation in a barren desert. What is wanting in testimony must be made up in words; and hence we have lengthy chapters, and even volumes, on a few isolated passages of Scripture, which have as little bearing upon the subject as they have connection with each other. Nor do we know of any one subject to which this remark would more truly apply, than the one before us. Texts of Scripture are brought forward to show that the doctrine of the Trinity is implied, when the truth of the contrary is not only implied, but is most clearly *expressed*, and that, too, by Jehovah himself. A vast amount of time and labor have been bestowed, in order to show that some of the names of Deity are plural, when the only conclusion to which this fact could lead us, would be, if any at all, that we have more Deities than one, and when we have, at every step of the investigation, the solemn statement of God himself that this conclusion is false. In the face of his own testimony to the contrary, men have searched for evidences of a plurality, hoping to reach a

conclusion which would in no way follow, even if the evidence itself should be ever so good and sufficient. Passages, dim with mystery, are referred to as pointing out, in some way, this strange and incomprehensible doctrine, not so much because it was either expressed or implied in them, but more from the fact, it would seem, that if they did not teach this, they were unable to tell what they did teach. As the doctrine itself is a very mysterious one, so it would be reasonable to expect that those passages of Scripture which treat of it, might, some of them at least, be involved in obscurity. And, hence, some are ready to conclude that almost any verse in the Bible which they cannot understand, must have some reference to the Trinity.

But let us not deceive ourselves. What God has not expressly declared, he does not require us to believe. The leading doctrines of the Bible are not given in language that is unintelligible. That which is once distinctly stated, and which it is necessary that we should know, will, generally, be stated again. The same great truth, laid down in the first book of revelation, will be found to run clear through to the very last. That God is good and true, and desires the happiness of all; that man needs a Saviour, and has had one provided for him; that he is destined to live forever, and cannot be happy unless he is holy — these

and all the other important doctrines of the Bible, are stated in the plainest and most positive terms, and are repeated, over and over, throughout every part of the Sacred Word. And so, too, of the Trinity. If such a doctrine was true, and God had required us to believe it, he would have expressly declared it. He would have stated that he had a Son who was equal with himself, and that while he and his Son were two distinct persons, and while there was still another who was distinct from both, they were, nevertheless, all one Supreme Being. We should not be left to mere conjecture on a question of such great importance, but should have the truth plainly stated, and should then be commanded to believe it.

But has this been done? has the Word of God even once declared that it was true? While it speaks so many times of the unity of God, why does it not say that in this unity there is a Trinity? Why not state in one place, at least, so important a truth? The last doctrine, if true, is as important as the first, and that it is far more difficult to comprehend, no one will deny. We need stronger evidence to convince us of its truth than we do of any other doctrine that we have ever been required to believe. There are many things revealed to us in the Bible which we could not have discovered by our natural reason; but there is no doc-

trine which, when revealed, appears so *contrary* to our reason as this one of the Trinity. It is the only one against which our reason revolts, and which the more we try to believe, the more we feel that it cannot be true.

Then, if we are required to believe such a doctrine, the evidence from God's Word should be very clear and conclusive. This, Trinitarians themselves admit. But have we ever found such evidence? Every other important doctrine of the Bible is stated clearly and repeatedly; this one is never stated once. God has not said that it was so; and even if he had, we could not but feel that it appeared absurd. There is no man that ever did or ever can believe that three are one. The very moment that such a proposition is submitted, he will reject it as a self-evident contradiction.

Ask a man to prove to you from the Bible the doctrine of the Trinity. Tell him to show you a single passage where it is declared in so many words, and he will call your attention to the evidence that there is for the divinity of Christ. Ask him next to prove to you that the Deity in Christ is not the only one there is in existence — tell him that you believe in the supreme divinity of our Lord — that in Christ you believe there dwelt an undivided Deity, and that one

is our Father. Then ask him to prove that this is not true. Show him the numerous places where the Deity in Christ is called our Father, and then ask him to show you one where he is called God the Son. Let him examine what Christ and his apostles have said upon this subject, together with the testimony of the prophets, and then answer the question himself, whether the evidence is greater for one person or for three.

There are a great many devout Christians who would, to-day, renounce the doctrine of three divine persons, if they had not been taught that in doing this they must also deny the divinity of Christ. They never have been able to comprehend the Trinity, and in their hearts never could, in fact, believe it. It is a question which they never could reconcile, and which they never will, until they acknowledge and worship God, not as three in one, but *one in Christ.* Upon this great truth will the church of our Redeemer finally stand, and in that day "there shall be *one Lord,* and his name *one.*"

CHAPTER VI.

THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

CHRIST was the Son of God as no one else ever was. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and was born of a virgin, as no one else ever was; he is therefore called the only begotten Son of God. He had no earthly father, but was begotten directly and immediately by God himself. To deny this would be to deny the Bible. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

The mother of Christ, then, was a virgin, and God was his Father as truly as Mary was his mother. He did not receive his soul from Adam, but directly

from God himself. And, hence, Christ tells us that he proceeded and came forth from God, and that he came down from heaven, etc. He did not receive his soul from Adam, or else he would have inherited Adam's guilt. If the soul of Christ was transmitted from Adam, as was his body, and as have been the souls and bodies of all other men, it would have been equally guilty. If the doctrine of the fall, and the consequent depravity of all men, be true, and the Son of God received his soul from the same source as have all others, it would certainly have been in the same state of guilt.

But, we all admit, that he was "without sin;" that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." All men, we say, are sinners by nature. But he never had any sin. He was neither a sinner by nature nor by transgression; and, though he was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet he lived without sin. But if he had come into the world as have all other men, he would have been as much under the sentence of death as are they, and he would not have died voluntarily, as he declares he did, but would have died under the compulsion of a divine decree. It would have been "appointed once" for him to die, the same as other men, because his soul would have been derived from the same source, and

would be under the same condemnation. But the "holy thing," or person, which was born of Mary, and which was called the Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and received its soul, therefore directly from God himself. He who by his spirit breathed into Adam the breath of life, whereby he became a living soul, by the same spirit so overshadowed the mother of Jesus as to bring into existence the soul of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven: "*The power of the highest shall overshadow thee*," etc.

But, if the Son received his soul from God, did not God impart to him a portion of his own divine nature? We most unhesitatingly answer, he did. That which was begotten by him, and which is declared to be the express image of his person, could only be a part of himself. There was as much of God in Christ as could be confined of an infinite and omnipresent Being within any finite form. God, let it be remembered, is everywhere. He is a boundless, illimitable ocean of spirit. In him we all live, and move, and have our being. He cannot be confined to time or space; but is the "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." He is God in Christ, and God out of Christ, and God everywhere, from everlasting to everlasting. There was as much

of that vast nature in the man Christ Jesus as could possibly be confined within such narrow limits. God is in every man; but in his Son was the fullness of God. In him "dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and through him God exerted the mighty influences of his eternal spirit.

Then, is the Son God? If he derived his soul from Deity, — if God imparted to him a part of his own divine nature, — is he not equally divine? Divine, we answer, he most certainly is; and God he is to us, in the sense given above. But, are not the angels in heaven, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and all holy beings in the universe, also divine? Did they not receive that holiness which is the image of God directly from him? Did not the Deity impart to them a portion of his own spirit, whereby they became thus holy, and were made likenesses of his own divine nature?

But, if this universally-diffused spirit is in all things, and is that by which all the children of God are led, and by which they are kept, and made to resemble their Divine Creator, — if, by it, they are filled with the fullness of God, and become true images of the great original, — does this, therefore, divide the Deity? Should we say that they were all so many different persons of the Godhead? As

well might we say that the sun which gives light and heat to the planet Mercury is not the one which shines upon us. Other suns there may be which give light to other worlds; but there is only one spiritual Sun in the universe, and that one imparts life and light to all. He is the Lord our God, and beside him there is none else.

And here we cannot fail to observe the erroneous views which the doctrine of three divine persons has a tendency to give us of the nature and character of God. It impresses him upon the mind as a localized Being, and not as filling immensity with his presence, as the Bible declares that he does. It leads us to think of one person, whom we call God the Father, as enthroned in heaven, and another divine person, called God the Son, who was once upon earth, and who, though the infinite and eternal Jehovah, was confined to one human being as the only place of his habitation; and, beside these, still another, who also is a supreme Deity, and who is waiting, as it were, to receive orders from the other two, and then carrying the same into execution. The God who was in Christ here upon earth is thought of as a different and distinct Being from the one who was in heaven. He was confined exclusively to the man in whom he dwelt, and only moved

from place to place as that human temple carried him; nor could he ascend into heaven until it ascended with him. He was the Deity on earth; the Father was the one who reigned in heaven. The God who became incarnate was the eternal Son, and he lived in the body which was prepared for him, and nowhere else. He was the God in Christ; his Father, though in him, was the God out of Christ. That Being who fills heaven, and earth, and hell with his presence, is thus contracted in his infinite dimensions, so to speak, and is bounded by the narrow walls of the temple in which he dwells. And, hence, a great many would be offended if we were to say that there did not dwell, in the man Christ Jesus, the whole of the infinite nature of God. In him, the church asserts, are "two *whole* and *perfect* natures." But these are not the exalted views which the Scriptures give us of the Deity. If we were to take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, they declare that God would be there. If we were to take up our bed in hell, he would be there. And if we were to fly to the most distant star that gems the arch of the firmament of heaven, God would be there in all his majesty and power. He "sitteth upon the circle of the earth," and is also present to direct and control the movements of

every other planet. He is with us, and his eye is resting upon us wherever we go; by night and by day, in the caverns of earth and in the depths of the sea, in this world, and in the world of spirits. God is everywhere; none can evade his presence. "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee."

God, as we said before, is a boundless unfathomable ocean of spirit. He dwells in his Son, and reigns through him. He is at the same time dwelling in the hearts of all his people, and is working in them to will and to do of his own good pleasure. The church on earth, and in heaven, holy men and angels, are filled with his presence, and are only happy because they have received the fullness of his divine spirit. They have found the perfectness of their nature, and the completeness of their joy, because they have found God in their souls.

But is it not all the same spirit? Is not the God in Christ, the one who is also in us? If we love God, does he not dwell in us, and we in him? And is it not the same spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead, that will also quicken our mortal bodies? Why say, then, that the God in Christ was a different person from the one whom we call his Father? If his Father is our Father, and his God is our God, and he dwells

in us all: how can we say that there is still another? Might we not as well say that the Deity in us is a different person from the one which dwells in every other believer? And are we not bound to admit, on the supposition of three persons, that the God and Saviour of men is not the God and Father of the angels in heaven?

If they are the "Sons of God" who "shouted for joy," the Deity is their Father; and if, as is believed, they have never fallen, they did not need a Saviour. They could approach and worship God out of Christ, while we worship him in and through Christ. But if the one whom they adore, and who is their Father, is a different person from the one who revealed himself in the flesh — then the God whom we claim and worship as our Redeemer, and who, we say, is not the Father, but the eternal Son, is a different person from the one they worship: and hence our affections would not all be centered upon the same, but different objects. They would worship God as one, while we would worship him as *three* in one. If they have never been redeemed, and do not stand in need of a Saviour, they would ascribe honor and glory to that divine person who is their Creator, and the Father of their spirits; while we should not only adore him, but should ascribe equal honor and praise to another divine

person, who is also our God, and the one, too, who has redeemed us from our sins. Then would all our affections be placed upon the same object? Would there be one supreme head and center toward which all the inhabitants of heaven and earth would tend? If, beside the Father, we worship God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and the others do not — have we all the same Supreme Deity? And if we worship persons of the Godhead, of which the inhabitants of other worlds may be ignorant, might they not also know of persons in the Godhead of which we are ignorant; and if this be true, instead of there being only three persons, might there not be almost an infinite number?

But why claim that there are even three? Why not say that the God in Christ, is the one who is in every other being, and the only one there is or can be in the universe? Is not this the language of Inspiration? Are we not told that the "head of Christ is God?" And did not Christ come into the world that he might bring us to God? And if we are brought to him through a mediator, while others may come to him without a mediator, is it not still the same God whom they all worship?

But while it is true that there is only one Supreme Being, and that he is in all and through all; it is also

true that he dwelt in his Son, and revealed himself through him, as he never did through any other man. God has more clearly revealed himself through his Son, and is more closely united with him, than he ever was, perhaps, with any one else. In the first place, he is his only begotten Son; in the second place, he never sinned; and in the third place, he was *that man* whom God had fore-ordained, from the foundation of the world, to be the Prince and Saviour of men. Through him is preached the forgiveness of sins, and by him came the resurrection of the dead. In him God is now reconciling the world unto himself, and by him will judge it at the last day. God revealed himself in the creation of the heavens and the earth, for "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work." He made a still higher revelation of himself in the creation of man in his own image. In the inspiration of the prophets he has taught us many things touching his character and attributes. But in his only begotten Son he has been more clearly revealed, and we have learned more perfectly the relations that we sustain to him and to each other, than ever before. He has revealed light and immortality in the gospel of his Son. By him we have been more clearly taught that God is a spirit, and that he is a Being of infinite love and compassion. Man's

need of pardon and salvation, the work of the spirit in purifying the heart, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the holiness of God and the happiness of heaven,— these and other great truths were never so clearly made known as they have been through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The paternity of God and the universal brotherhood of man, were first distinctly taught by him, in and through whom God has given his highest and most glorious revelation to man. God is in his Son, and has manifested his glory through him, in the recovery of man, and in reëstablishing him in righteousness, as he never did and never could have done in man's creation. By him God has reclaimed a fallen world, and has brought it back to himself. His love and mercy shine forth in his Son as they never did in the prophets. They were sinful, while he was pure and holy. They were conceived in sin, while he never had any sin. Their submission to God was only partial, while his was perfect and entire. They sometimes rebelled and were in doubt; he never had any doubts, and never made any mistakes. He was always resigned to his Father's will, and obedient even unto death. The spirit of God rested upon the prophets and other good men, and their union with him was more or less complete, according as they were more or less holy. With the Son the spirit dwelt

constantly, and in him alone was there a perfect union of the human and the divine. Hence we are told that *this man* "was counted worthy of more glory" than was even Moses, and that God, even his God, had anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows. He is the only one who ever lived in this world without sin; and because he was pure and holy, and was willing to humble himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross — "wherefore," we read, "God also hath highly exalted him," etc. It was not so much because he came into the world holy, but more because he *remained* so, that God conferred upon him such great honors, and gave him such an exalted position. Out of innumerable failures, he was, as Robertson has said, the only bud that ever developed into a perfect flower on earth. He alone, though he was tempted, and though he severely suffered from temptation, did not sin. He resisted every temptation, submitted to every humiliation, finished his course with joy, and was exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

But though he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and was therefore declared to be God's only begotten Son, and to be holy; yet he did not reach the perfection of his nature, except through trial and suffering, the same as have all other men. The Son of God was

as truly on probation, as was Adam, or as were the angels of heaven. We read not only that he was tempted in all points like as we are, but also that he "*suffered* being tempted." He not only "increased in wisdom and stature," but was also developed in his moral nature by the discipline through which he passed. And hence we are told that God "in bringing many sons unto glory," made "the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering," and that Christ, "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

According to the inspired record, he as certainly increased in knowledge, and became strong morally and intellectually by the privations which he endured, and the sufferings which he bore, as, physically, he grew from a helpless infant up to the stature of a full-grown man. He was not fully matured, nor was he prepared for the place of honor which was assigned him in heaven, until he had submitted to every dispensation of his Father's will, and had drunk of the last bitter cup of sorrow here upon earth. His final and complete union with God, which he calls his glorification, was not reached at once, but was with him, as it is with us, a progressive work. Step by step, and day by day, the sorrowing, suffering Son of God traveled the path of life, submitting with patience

and fortitude to trials and temptations, until his probation was ended, and he was fully prepared for the joys that awaited him in his Father's home. He was as certainly here on trial, and did as certainly go up from earth "through great tribulation," as have any others before or since. And he as certainly, therefore, did feel the need of help from on high, and did as earnestly pray to his Father for grace and strength, that he might endure unto the end. He not only taught his disciples the necessity of prayer, but felt that it was necessary for himself. He prayed with them, and he prayed when all alone; he prayed for them, and he earnestly pleaded with God for himself. Luke tells us that he was all night engaged in prayer. "For the joy that was set before him," he "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

But if the Son of God was on probation, and if probation implies trial, and is a state of being from which their is a liability to fall; and if it is, further, a state of being which is to be succeeded by another, with which it is intimately connected,—then is the Son, God? Was the Deity ever on probation? was there ever a liability for him to fall? was the state in which he now is, preceded by one of trial? and is what he now enjoys, the result of what he then en-

dured? Is it not said that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man"? Then how could the only begotten Son, if he was God, not only be tempted with evil, but actually suffer from the same? If he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of a woman, "increased in wisdom," learned obedience, and was made perfect through suffering; if he "suffered being tempted," lived a life of prayer and faith, became obedient unto death, had a resurrection from the dead, and has entered into his reward; can it be possible that he is the supreme and everlasting Jehovah?

No, he is not God, but he is his only begotten and dearly beloved Son. God is revealed in him, and has manifested himself forth through him. The work of God in Christ is the great theme of all the apostles. The fall of man through Adam, and his salvation through Christ, are the two leading thoughts in God's Word.

Milton struck the great key-note of the Bible when he sung of paradise lost, through the first man Adam, and paradise regained, through the second Adam. Through the first Adam man lost heaven, and was cut off from communion with his Maker; through the second, paradise has been regained, and a lost and fallen world has been brought back to God. "As by man

came death, by *man* came also the resurrection of the dead." "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," and judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so "the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many," and they who receive of this gift, and of the abundance of grace, shall reign in life by him. Through the first man Adam all must die; through the second man Adam they shall be made alive. The first Adam was tempted and fell; the second Adam was tempted, but lived "without sin." The first man Adam, as he had no earthly father, is called the Son of God; the second Adam, as he had no earthly father, and as he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin by the Holy Ghost, is not only called the Son of God, but also his only begotten Son. The first Adam was a representative of the entire human family. From him we have all descended, and in him we have all become sinful. The second man Adam is also a representative of the entire race, and is therefore called *the Son of man*. By the righteousness of this man, the "free gift came upon all men to justification of life;" and by his "obedience," shall "many be made righteous." He was not the son of Joseph, or of any other man, but was the brother of all. He did not represent any sect or nationality, but had

sympathies wide as the world, and intensely loved all of every kindred and tribe and people. He taught that God was our Father; that he was our brother; that all the nations of the earth were of one family. He was not the Jew, nor the Greek, nor the Roman, nor the Barbarian, but was the *Son* of *man*. And wherever he met a fallen and lost son of Adam's race, he claimed him as his brother, told him that he had a Father in heaven, and that his origin was divine and his hopes eternal.

The Jews claimed that they should love one another because they had one common father. They had descended from Abraham, and were therefore members of the same family, and should love each other as brethren. But they could, at the same time, hate all the other nations of the earth. To remove this prejudice, and to destroy the feelings of hatred which existed among all the other nations, Christ taught that the Deity was the great Father of us all, and that we were therefore united in one common brotherhood. He transferred the fatherhood from Abraham right up to the God of heaven, and upon this great truth he laid the foundation of his universal empire. Whenever he speaks to them, therefore, about the Deity, instead of saying that he is God, he, in more than *one hundred* places, calls him their Father. "Call no man your father

upon earth," he said, "for ye have one Father which is in heaven." "After this manner," said he, "pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven." "Pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Who is it that knows what things we need before we pray? "Your Father," Christ answers, "knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." Who will forgive us, if we forgive others? "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your *heavenly Father* will also forgive you." Does God clothe the lilies of the field, and feed the fowls of the air? "Your heavenly Father," he answers, "feedeth them." Why are you to love your enemies, and bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you? "That ye may be the children of your *Father* which is in heaven." Are we to be perfect as God is perfect? "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your *Father* which is in heaven is perfect."

And so in all his public discourses, and in all his private conversations, he constantly points them to the Deity as their Father. The Father is the one who sent him into the world, the one who performs through him such mighty works, the one to whom he prays, and from whom he received his doctrine, his kingdom, his life, his all. He is obedient to him through life, and commends to him his spirit in death.

There was no truth which Christ ever taught more distinctly, or to which he referred more frequently, than that God was our Father, and that he was his Son. And wherever this truth has been proclaimed, it has exerted a mighty influence upon the minds of men. The nations of the earth have been coming closer together, have felt that they had one common origin, were members of the same family, and should love each other, therefore, as brethren. It is a truth which, like the Christian religion itself, has been widening and spreading in its influence ever since it was first uttered; and which is destined one day to take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. And whenever all men have learned that God is their Father, and that Christ is their friend and brother, and that they are bound to him and to each other by the nearest ties and the most endearing relations, and have felt this truth in their hearts, then they will not "learn war any more," but will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

To effect such a happy consummation as this, God has sent his Son into the world. By the great truths

which he taught, the noble life which he lived, and the heroic death which he died, he revealed to us the dignity of man and the infinite mercy and goodness of God. By his resurrection from the dead, he demonstrated the divinity of his mission, and the immortal destiny of our race. By his Godlike example, we have learned how pure and holy are those who live without sin, and who are in constant communion with God.

Man had heard of holiness in every age of the world, but had never understood what it was until he had before him a living example. When, in the fullness of time, the Son made his appearance, and men gazed into his face, and saw there reflected the glory of God; and when they heard the words of gentleness and love which fell from his lips, as he told them of his Father and of heaven, and that he was indeed their brother, and that if they would live like him they might dwell with him in their Father's home forever; that for this purpose his Father had sent him, and that for this purpose he had come;— when this was seen and heard, it kindled a new fire in the hearts of men; they felt as they never had before, and began to strive for a higher and a nobler life. The thoughts of God, and immortality, and heaven, which he inspired, aroused them from the

slumber of ages, and from that moment a brighter and a happier morning began to dawn upon the world. He told them that he had come to reconcile them to God and bring them to heaven; that for this purpose he would institute a church upon earth which would conduct them, if faithful, into the church above; that in order to be happy they must be holy; that his Father had given him a kingdom, and all power and authority to administer the government of the same; that they were the subjects of this kingdom, and that he should rule over it, and be their king, until the work of reconciliation was finally effected, and death was destroyed, and that then the kingdoms would become one, and God would be all in all.

This is who the only begotten Son of God is, and this is the work which God sent him to do. Through sin man had become unholy, and was estranged from his Maker. Christ came to restore him to righteousness, and bring him back to God. The world was lost, and he came to save it. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people; all nations were in the valley and shadow of death, and he came to give them light. All were dead, because all had sinned; and he therefore came, that through him all might have life.

"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Men had the impression that God was cruel, and delighted in their punishment. They were therefore afraid, and desired to shun his presence. Christ came to reveal the love of God, and to teach them that he alone could make them happy. "God so loved the world," he told them, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And that he might impress this truth upon their minds, he declares again, that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved." "In this was manifested the love of God," says John, "because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." All men, again, desired to be free. They had been seeking after freedom in every age and nation, but had never found it. Christ told them that they could find it in God. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free," said he, "ye shall be free indeed." Man was in slavery, because he lived in sin; was unhappy, because he was in rebellion against his Maker; and the Son of God was, therefore sent into the world that he might put down the rebellion, and restore peace and happiness to the nations of the earth. He

therefore set up his kingdom upon earth, which is a kingdom of righteousness, and over it he will reign till righteousness everywhere prevails, and the "ransomed church of God are saved to sin no more." "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." "The *last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*"

For this purpose he now sits upon the mediatorial throne, and holds the keys of death and hell; and upon it he will remain until death, hell and the grave have submitted to his sway, and a voice is heard from heaven saying, "There shall be no more death."

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the *Son also himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him*, that God may be all in all."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE Father of the only begotten Son is the Holy Ghost. This the Bible expressly declares. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And it is, therefore, stated in the Apostles' Creed, and taught in all the churches of the land, that the Son of God was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," etc.

But if he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and was declared to be the Son of God, the Holy Ghost is not only his Father, but is also his God; and hence he is the one who is called "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and the one who is also declared to be the God and Father of us all. Then, how can the Holy Ghost be a person distinct from the one whom we call the Father? How can we say that there are three persons, and that the Father of Christ

is the first person, and then assert, as we do, that he was begotten by the third person? Is not the one who begets a son, the father of that son? And if Christ was begotten by one person, and is, at the same time, the Son of another person, did he not have two Fathers? And if he did have two, and each one of these is supremely divine, can he be equal with them? If the Son was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and we say that he is the second person in the Trinity, and then admit, which we are bound to do on this supposition, that the first and third persons are each his Father, what kind of a Trinity would that make? One divine person, who is *called* the Father of all; and another divine person, who *is* the Father of all; and still another person, who is the Son of the other two. Then, instead of saying that there is only "one God and Father of all," Paul should have stated that there are two — two Fathers and one Son.

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," is the language of Luke; while Matthew states it in these words: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a pub-

lic example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 1:18–20.) Then, it is certain that the conception of Christ was the work of the Holy Ghost, who was, therefore. his Father, whether he had any other or not.

Doctor Whedon has seen this difficulty, and is the only commentator, so far as we have observed, who has noticed it. He admits that, if the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Ghost, it would make the latter his Father; and he, therefore, denies that it was the Holy Ghost. In his note on Luke 1:35, he says: "The phrase *holy spirit* here designates not the third person in the Trinity; for, then, he would be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; but the same holy spirit of Deity which brooded upon chaos, and produced the creation. . . . *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee* — The pure spirit of God should sanctify her nature, and render her the holy mother of the Son of God." He sees the difficulty very clearly, and, to avoid it, he denies what both the Bible and the church most positively teach. It is not the Holy Ghost that is meant, he thinks, but

the "pure spirit of God," or the "holy spirit of Deity which brooded upon chaos, and produced the creation." But both Matthew and Luke declare that it was the Holy Ghost; and their statement has never been contradicted by any other writer. It is not only the testimony of the evangelists, but has been the doctrine of the church ever since. If it is not the Holy Ghost, why do these inspired writers say that it is? And beside this, if we accept Doctor Whedon's explanation, it would make *four* persons instead of three. For, if the *pure spirit of God* is not the Holy Ghost, but is the "holy spirit of Deity which brooded upon chaos," then it is certain, on the supposition of the Trinitarian, that, in addition to the Father and the Son, there are two other separate and distinct spirits in the Godhead. The one is the "pure spirit of God," of which Doctor Whedon speaks, and the other is the Holy Ghost, which Christ declares is the "spirit of truth."

But what kind of a Deity would this make? If the Holy Ghost is a spirit, and if the Father and the Son are two other spirits — which is Mr. Howe's definition of the Trinity,— and if these three spirits are all one Deity, and this one Deity has a spirit which is neither the Holy Ghost, nor either of the others, separately, but the spirit of the three united in one,— then why

may we not say that the Deity is made up of *seven* spirits, and that these are the seven of which John speaks in the book of Revelation?

But as unreasonable as is the view taken by Doctor Whedon, it is not any more so than the position taken by all other Trinitarians. He denies that the Son was conceived by the Holy Ghost, while the Bible declares that he was. The church, on the other hand, asserts that he *was* conceived by the Holy Ghost, and then denies that the Holy Ghost was his Father. Doctor Whedon asserts that if the Son was begotten by the third person in the Trinity, it would necessarily make him the Son's Father. It cannot be the "third person," he says, "for then he would be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And in this we are bound to admit that he is correct. But the church, far less consistent in this respect, declares that, while he was conceived by the third person, he is, nevertheless, the Son of the first person. The church may appear to be more scriptural, but Doctor Whedon is certainly far more logical and consistent. For, if the Son was conceived by the third person in the Trinity, and he is a person distinct from the Father, as is claimed, then this conception was the work of the third person, and not the work of the Father. Or, if, by the "power of the highest," we are to understand the agency and work

also of the Father, as is claimed by some, then, this conception was the work of two persons, and the Son would therefore have two Fathers.

But no one will admit that he had two Fathers. As soon would it be believed that he had two mothers.

Then the Father and the Holy Ghost are not two different persons, but are one and the same. In other words, the Holy Ghost, as stated in the first chapter, is God's *spirit*, and is no more a person distinct from him, than is the spirit of a man a person distinct from the man himself.

We do not say that the man is one person, and that his word is another person, and his spirit still another; but that the man is *one*, and that he works *by* his word and *by* his spirit, etc. Man *is* a spirit the same as is God, and was in this respect made in the image of God. His spirit is that which he received from Deity; that which God imparted to him when he breathed into Adam the breath of life and he became a living soul. And as man is a spirit, and the spirit is the *man*, so is God a spirit, and the spirit is *God*. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." He is nothing but spirit — a purely spiritual and omnipresent Being. His spirit is *himself*, and cannot possibly be a person different or distinct from himself. In it

we all live and move and have our being. He is the "eternal spirit" which searcheth all things.

But if God is a spirit, and the spirit is God, what does he mean when he speaks of *his* spirit? In answer we ask, what do we mean when we speak of *our* spirits? We speak of them in the same way precisely that he does of his, and mean the same thing. What then is the spirit of a man? Is it his soul; or would we call these, two different and distinct essences, or spirits of the man? And if these are not the same, what do we understand by the mind? Is it distinct from the other two? or are they all the same? We are to love God with all our mind, and heart, and soul, and strength; are to worship him in our bodies and spirits, which are his, and are to pray that we may be sanctified throughout soul, and body, and spirit, and other similar expressions.

Now, what are we to understand by such language? If the word of God, and his spirit, are different and distinct persons of the Godhead, so are the word and spirit of man different persons of the man, because the Bible speaks of all in the same way. And if the word of man and his spirit are two different persons of the man, so are also his mind, and heart, and soul, as many more; and this would make, as we have seen in another chapter, not *three* persons, but a much larger

number. But whoever thought of teaching that there were three or five, or any other number of persons in man? Who does not believe that he is one in person, as he is one in body and one in spirit; and that while there are what we call different departments of the mind, and different members of the body, there is yet only one man, and that is his immortal soul! And if we even believed that the mind, and the soul, and the spirit were not the same thing, we should not say that each one of these was a person, and that each one was singly, and by itself, *a man;* and if any one was unreasonable enough to teach such a doctrine, it would not be true. Then how can it be true that the word and the spirit of God are persons distinct from each other, and yet that each one of these is perfect Deity?

But we apprehend that by the mind, and soul, and spirit, we are not to understand so many different agents or spirits of the man, but only different names given to the different manifestations of the same spiritual and immortal being, *acting under different conditions and modes of existence.* We do not think that many will differ with us when we say that the mind is the soul as connected with the body, and that the spirit is the mind or soul exerting itself *through* the body. To the latter part of this proposition, especially, we do not think that many will object; since it is

certain that the Bible uses the term *spirit* in this sense in very many places. The soul is acknowledged to be the spiritual and immortal principle in man. It was not formed from the dust of the earth, but came directly from God. God formed man from the dust of the ground, and then "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

The soul is called this immortal principle, whether active or passive. The spirit, on the other hand, is the soul in action, or the soul as it is seen exerting itself through the body. Man has a soul, whether working or resting, whether awake or sleeping; but when the man is aroused, and his soul is seen manifesting itself in the features of the face, and in all the movements of the body, we call it his spirit. As it speaks to us through the eye and in the voice, and in the motions of the hands and face, we say that it is the spirit of the man conversing with our spirits. If he is very active, and displays a great deal of energy, we speak of him as a man of "great spirit," or one who is "full of spirit;" while, if he is not active, and does and says but little, he is declared to be a man "without spirit." In this way do we all speak of the soul when in action, and when we have the evidence of its activity from the influence which it exerts upon us, or upon other surrounding objects. We call it the *spirit* of the man. The soul operating through the body *is* the spirit.

And as we use it in this sense, so do also the writers of the Bible. We read that when the queen of Sheba saw the glory of Solomon, she was so overcome that "there was no more spirit in her." She had a soul as much as she ever had, but it had no power to act. Such a display of magnificence was more than she could bear; and because she was unable, for the time, to speak or move, it is therefore declared that her spirit was gone. So Jacob, when he first heard that Joseph was yet alive, fainted in his heart; but when assured that it was really true, it is said that "the spirit of Jacob their father revived." So also when the kings of the Amorites and the Canaanites heard of the wonderful displays of the power of God by the hand of Joshua — "their heart fainted, neither was their spirit in them any more." They lost their energy, and did not feel that they had the courage to take up arms against Israel. In the same way it is said of Samson that, when he was nearly famishing for water, and God provided it for him, "when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived"; and of the Egyptian who was brought to David, when pursuing the Amalekites, and who had been for three days without anything to eat or drink, that, after they gave him food and water, "his spirit came again to him."

In all these instances, and in others which might

be given, it is evident that by the spirit of man the inspired writers mean the soul in action — or the mind, in its three departments of intellect, sensibility, and will, exerting itself through the body.

Man has the power to *think*, to *feel*, and to *will*. These are called the three great departments or divisions of the human mind. It is not so divided in fact, because the mind is one and indivisible, but these are so many powers, so to speak, of the one immortal soul. We learn of the existence of these powers of the soul in *ourselves* from consciousness; and we learn of their existence in others, only as they act upon us through the material body in which the soul dwells, and with which it is united. We know nothing of the working of a man's mind, only as we see it in and through his body. If through it, the soul goes out and converses with us, we do not say, generally, that it is his soul, but his spirit — the spirit of the man communing with our spirits; and as we thus speak, so, as we have seen, does also the Bible. What the man *speaks*, or *does*, we call the work of his spirit.

Now, in the same way, precisely, does the Bible speak of the spirit of God. As we judge of the spirit of man by his actions, so we judge and speak of God's spirit. If the actions of the man give evidence of great bravery, we call him a "brave spirit"; if they are

noble, we say that he has a "noble spirit"; if kind and patient, a "kind and patient spirit"; and so of all his actions. *So what God does in us is called the work of the spirit of God.* It is through the operation of his spirit that we are renewed in heart and become new creatures. By it we are born again; by it we are sanctified, and made partakers of the holiness of God; by it we are comforted and guided into all truth; and by it we will not only be led through this life, but will be raised from the dead and conducted into heaven.

It was the spirit of God that "moved upon the face of the waters" in the morning of creation, that brought into existence all the host of heaven, breathed into Adam a "living soul," inspired all the prophets, became the Father of the only begotten Son, was the one by whose power Christ performed his miracles, filled the hearts of believers with joy and gladness, and promised to continue with them "even to the end of the world." As the soul, acting through the body, is called the spirit of man; so what God does in us *through his Son* is called the work of his spirit. God is everywhere, whether we realize it or not. He is present with us and is working in us, though, like Jacob, we may know it not. His spirit is ever hovering around and about us as a cloud of mercy, and this spirit is God. God *is a spirit*, and the spirit,

therefore, *must be God.* Whether in Christ, or out of Christ; before the incarnation, or after the incarnation — God is not, never was, and never *can be*, anything but an omnipresent spirit. And to say, therefore, that he is one person, and the holy spirit is another person, is even more unreasonable, and is a more monstrous doctrine, than to assert that the man and his spirit are two distinct persons of the same man.

Whenever the Bible speaks of the Deity, without any reference to what he has done, or is doing, it declares that he is God the everlasting Jehovah. When it speaks of the works which he has performed, it calls them the works of God; just as it calls what a man performs, the works of man. But when it speaks of that *by* which God works, it tells us that it is his *word*, and his *spirit*, etc.; just as when it declares that that by which a man works is *his* word and *his* spirit. Now, it is certain that when these expressions are used in speaking of the Deity, they mean nothing more than when the same expressions are used in speaking of man. God's word and spirit are no more distinct from him than a man's word and spirit are distinct from the man. The same expressions are used in the Bible in reference to both, and in precisely the same sense. The spirit of God is to him, and performs for him, what the spirit of man is *to* and per-

forms *for* the man. And they are not only used in the same sense, but the very reason why these things are said of God is that he may be more fully comprehended by us.

The spirit of man is inclosed in a human body This body is not the *man*, but simply the house in which he dwells. It may be destroyed and the *man* still live. It may return to the dust from whence it was taken, and the spirit, which is the man, will return to God. Now, as man has a temple in which he dwells, so has the Deity; and this temple is the whole fabric of the material universe. The heavens above and the earth beneath, compose the house or dwelling-place of an invisible and omnipresent Deity. These are the outward forms in which God "has concealed," as Robertson expresses it, "his essence — the living garment in which the invisible has robed his mysterious loveliness." And as man acts and speaks through his body, so does God act and speak in all the works of Nature. The stars that look down upon us in silent majesty reveal to us the living God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." But in the face of Jesus Christ the glory of God is declared, and his character is seen and revealed; as in the face and actions of a man is seen and revealed the character of his soul. And hence, as

the soul of the man acts upon us through his body, so God is said to work in us through his Son. And as the operations of the man are from the soul, and through the body; so these divine operations are everywhere in the Bible declared to be from God and through his Son. And still further, as the operations of the soul through the body are said to be the operations of the spirit; so the work of God in our hearts is declared to be the operation of his spirit, or the work of the Holy Ghost.

That the soul does act through the body in the way we have described, no one will deny; and that God does work in us by and through his Son, and that this is called the work of his spirit, no one *can* deny who believes the Bible. It is the uniform language of Christ and all his apostles. That which dwelt in Christ was the spirit of God, and that spirit *was* God. It was this that was "made flesh and dwelt among us," and was really and truly God working for man's salvation. "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.*" And God is to-day operating in our hearts through his Son, in a similar way as the operations of the soul are performed through the body; and this will explain some passages of Scripture, we think, which cannot be understood in any other way.

The soul cannot act through the body unless it is

in union with it. Neither can God's spirit work in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, unless we are in union with him. He may and does influence all our hearts more or less; but before he can have entire control of our spirits, our union with him must be perfect and entire. But no one who is in sin can be perfectly united to God. A man must be holy, because God is holy, before they can be one. Hence the spirit of God was not given in its fullness to any except Christ. And even with him the union of the human and the divine was not fully completed until after his resurrection from the dead. Though "without sin," he was yet on probation, and had to endure trials and temptations the same as other men. He was made "perfect," as we have seen, "through suffering"; and "though a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." His union with the Deity was not, therefore, in this sense, made at once, but was with him, as it must be with us, a progressive work. This union he calls his glorification, even as our complete union with God in heaven is called our glorification. Hence the Son of God speaks of it as an event which is to take place in the future, and for it he earnestly prays to his Father. "Father, . . . glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Having finished his labors upon earth, and having

become fully resigned to the death which he was about to die, and speaking of it as though it had already taken place, he exclaims: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

Now, after his ascension into heaven, and his glorification, or complete and permanent union with God, was effected; we read that then, and not till then, the Holy Ghost was given in all its fullness to man. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, *because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*" God was to be in union with the Son of man, and was to work in us through him, as the soul is in the body and works through it; and his spirit could no more have free access to man, until this union was effected, than could the soul act through the body until it was united with it. Through the disobedience of the first man, sin entered into the world, and the hearts of men had become effectually closed to the spirit of God; through the obedience of the second man the door was opened, and God poured out his spirit upon all the nations. In other words, the spirit of God cannot be given in the plenitude of its power until it is in full and complete union with man; and *that* man must be the representative of the race, as was Adam, and must be the mediator between it and God.

In this way we can understand, again, why the

terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, occur in the order in which they are given in the New Testament. If they are so many distinct persons of the Godhead, and are equally divine, why is the Father named first? And if the Son was conceived by the Holy Ghost, why is the Son called the second person, and the Holy Ghost the third? If the latter is the Father of the Son, why is he not named first, and the Son last? If the Father is named first because he *is* the Father, why should not the Holy Ghost be called the second? or, if the Son has two Fathers, why is he placed after one and before the other? Why not sometimes place the Holy Ghost first, and the Father last? or, if the Son is equal with the other two, why is he not sometimes first and sometimes last, and not always in the middle? On the hypothesis of the Trinitarian, there can be no reason given why this order should be observed; but, on the contrary, there would be many reasons why it *should not*. The placing of the Son after the Father, because he was begotten by him, would, evidently, place him also after the Holy Spirit, and would make him the third person instead of the second. Nor could there be any reason, on this supposition, for always placing the Holy Spirit even after the Father; much less after the Son. Still, this is the

order in which Christ has given them, and from it the church, in this respect, has never departed.

Now, if we say that the Father is God, and that he works in us through his Son, and that this work of God is called the work of the Holy Ghost — we have then not only adopted the language of the Bible, but have explained why these terms are given in the above order. God, as our creator, is our Father; he is the "Father of Spirits." Of him and *from* him are all things. And as he is not only our Creator, but is declared to be our Redeemer and Saviour, he is, therefore, named first. And as the eternal life which he has given us, is received through his Son, his Son is named second. The stream of divine life is from the Father, *through* the Son, and into our hearts; therefore the Father is named first, and the Son second; and as this work in us is called the work of the Holy Ghost, or "spirit of truth," it is named last. What God does through his Son is called God's work, as what the soul does through the body is called man's work; but as this operation of the soul through the body is called the spirit of man, so the work of God in Christ is called the work of God's spirit. The terms Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, are to the Deity, after he became incarnate, what the terms soul, and body, and spirit, are to man. Hence this Trinity did not exist

until God manifested himself in the flesh, and this is the reason why it is never mentioned in the Old Testament.

God did not work through his Son the first four thousand years of the world's history, *because his Son was not yet born*, and could not have existed until he was born. But after the Son was born, and God dwelt in a human body, as does the soul of man, then, and not till then, do we read of a Divine Trinity. God out of Christ is a spirit, the same as is also man when separate from the body. When at death the soul is separated from the body, the spirit returns to God who gave it. The man is then as truly a spirit, and is nothing but a spirit, as God out of Christ is a spirit. But while connected with the body, there is in man a trinity, as there is with God in Christ a trinity. The man converses with us through his body. The operation is from the soul, through the body, and into our souls; as with God it is from the Father, through the Son, and into the hearts of the children of men. The Trinity in Christ is, then, the same as the trinity in man. The one is human, the other divine. The operation in the one instance is called the spirit of man, in the other the spirit of God.

But we have other evidences that this is indeed the correct view of the subject. While it is both reasona-

ble and scriptural, and while it satisfactorily explains those passages to which we have already referred, it will also explain many others which cannot be understood on any other supposition. "The Father that dwelleth in me," said Christ, "He doeth the works." In other places it is declared, as we have seen, that these works were done by the spirit of God, etc. Now why does he not say that the spirit which dwelleth in him *doeth the works*, and that they are done *by* the Father? It was certainly the spirit that did dwell in him, because he everywhere declares it; and that spirit was certainly God, because, as he himself teaches, and as all admit, "God is a spirit," and cannot be anything else. Then, we ask again, how can a spirit have a spirit? What kind of a being, or person, would the spirit of a spirit be? And if God is *a* spirit — which means *one* spirit — how can he be two? And if beside these there is still another spirit called God the Son, and he is the one who became incarnate, why does he not do the works himself? Why is it that the one that did become incarnate "can do nothing," and that the work is performed by two others who did *not* become incarnate? And if of these two, the work is said to have been done by the one, why are they declared to be the works of the other? If the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father, and if by

this spirit Christ performed all his works — how can they be the works of the Father?

To none of these questions can those who believe in three divine persons give any answer whatever. And if the word and the spirit of God are two different persons, as distinct from each other as they are from the Father, then the works of the one cannot be the works of the other. That which the spirit does would be the works of the spirit; and that which the Father does, the works of the Father; neither could the Father work by the spirit, and call that which he did *by it* his own works, any more than the spirit could work by the Father, and call that which it did by him the works of the spirit. If they are all equal, the one is as independent as the other, and that which each one does, by himself, would be his own works, and could not be the works of another. And yet the testimony is that God the Father does the works, and that he does them by his spirit, etc.

Now why is this so? Why does it not say that as the Father works by his word, and by his spirit, so do they work by the Father, and by each other? It is certain that if the doctrine of the Trinitarian is correct, the testimony of Christ and his apostles, on this point, must be rejected. For to say that the Son is equal with the Father, and is a person distinct from him,

and yet admit that he "can do nothing" of himself, would not only be a contradiction of terms, but would be worse than nonsense. And to say that the Father can work by the spirit, while the spirit *cannot* work by the Father, though he is equal in power and authority with him; or to say that what the spirit does is the work of the Father, while we claim that they are not the same but different persons, would be equally absurd.

But if we admit, what the Bible certainly seems to teach, that the Father is the Deity, and that he dwells in Christ in a similar way as, in man, the soul does in the body; and that as man works by his word and by his spirit, so does God; that as we call what the spirit does, in man, the works of man, so does the Bible call what the spirit of God does, the works of God; that as we say that the man works by his spirit, and not the spirit by the man, so is it said that the Deity works by his spirit, and not the spirit by the Deity; and that God is therefore one, as man is one; — if we are willing to admit this as true, we have certainly adopted the language of the Bible, and have at the same time most fully explained why such language is used. It gives us a very clear understanding of many things in the Word of God which, on any other supposition, would not only

appear unaccountable, but absolutely contradictory and absurd.

Still further: if this view of the subject is not correct, but the Son of God existed from eternity, why is not this fact revealed in the Old Testament? This we have already alluded to briefly, but wish, in this connection, to refer to it again. If the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three equally divine and eternal persons of the Godhead, why was the world in ignorance of this for more than forty centuries? These Scriptures speak frequently of the Deity who is our Father, and they reveal to us very clearly his character and attributes; and if, beside him, there are two others who are equally the object of praise and adoration, why do they not say so? If the Son existed before he was born of Mary, and was as truly God as was the Father, it was equally as important that he and the Holy Ghost should be known to the world, as that the Father should. Why, then, did not the Jews baptize in the name of the three? and why did not the prophets speak to us about God's dearly beloved and only begotten Son? Why do they not say that he was then in existence, instead of speaking of him as a Son who was to be born in the future? And, again, why was he not known and worshiped by the angels in heaven long before

his incarnation? Why are we told that not until after his resurrection from the dead, did God command the angels to bestow upon him these divine honors? Did he exist in the bosom of the Father from eternity, unknown to any in the universe; and would he forever have remained so if man had not fallen? God the Father was known in heaven and earth and hell; has been worshiped by angels and by men ever since they were brought into being, and will continue to be so forever and ever. The Son, on the other hand, it would seem, was unknown and unhonored until after he was born into this world, and will one day again, if the Bible is true, become "subject unto the Father," as he was when here upon earth, and as are we and all other beings in the universe of God.

It is said that a knowledge of this divine Trinity was a mystery not to be revealed until the time of the incarnation; that the Son of God was not to be known, and could not be known, until he was manifested by his works of redemption. But this does not meet the case. For if he existed from eternity, and is truly the everlasting God, as is claimed, he would have manifested himself whether man had fallen or not, and did, on that supposition, show forth his glory long before man was created; and

the same is equally true of the third person in the Trinity. The heavens would have declared their glory, and the "sons of God" would have given them equal honor and praise with the Father. And yet, up to the time that Christ was born, not a word is said about any except one, and he is declared to be our Father. If the three existed in one Godhead, and were, up to that time, only known as one person, then the revelation of the last two depended upon the contingency of man's falling, and might never have been revealed if man had remained holy; and if this be true, we might conclude that if, at any time in the future, the inhabitants of other worlds should become sinful, God, in his work for their redemption, would reveal some other person, or persons, not before known to any except himself; and so the number might continue to increase as the ages rolled away, and the necessities of the case might require. And even then it would be a mystery why the Deity should, before such revelation was made, be called by the name of one of these persons rather than another, and why the entire Godhead should, for so many centuries, be called by the same name that is afterward given to only one person of the Godhead. It would be teaching that the Father was the whole of the Deity, and then

afterward, asserting that he was only one person of it, and, therefore, misleading.

But would God do this? and is his character, and the number of parts or persons of which he is composed, thus variable and uncertain? While we may continue to learn more and more of his nature and attributes, is it also true that we shall never know how many different and distinct persons there may be united in that divine nature? And if we do not know, why should we insist that there are absolutely but three? If the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, was worshiped by the Jews as one, and we, because more enlightened, as is claimed, worship him as *three* in one, how do we know but when more fully enlightened, we shall worship him as twenty in one? If we can evade the force of the first commandment, which teaches that God is one, and say that it means three *united* in one, we can just as reasonably say that it means any other number whatever; and, having said that three means one, we can just as well say that it means none, or that it does not mean anything, and that, consequently, there is no God at all.

But if we assert, with the Bible, that God is one, and that he never was and never can be anything but one; that his Son is not mentioned in the Old Testament, as then existing, because he was not yet born,

and could not exist until he was born; that, for the same reason, he was not known by the angels in heaven, and did not, it would seem, receive honors from them until after God had raised him from the dead, and had proclaimed him as the visible king in which an invisible God should dwell, and through whom he should reign over them and men; that God is, therefore, still our Father, and Christ our brother; and that the Holy Ghost is God's spirit, working in us through him;—if we assume this as true, we have taken a view of the subject which is as scriptural as it is reasonable, and which will alone explain some of the most important passages in the Word of God. Difficulties will be met and explained which cannot be overcome in any other way, and many passages of Scripture can be made to harmonize with each other which have always appeared contradictory, and which can never be reconciled on any other supposition. God will remain one, as the Bible teaches, and his spirit will be to him what our spirits are to us — God a spirit, and man a spirit in God's image; God dwelling in a human body, and revealing himself through it, and man dwelling in a human body, and revealing himself through it; what God does through this human body — the spirit of God — and what man does through his body — the spirit of man. As man is soul and body and spirit, so God,

incarnate, is Father and Son and Holy Ghost; and as the first are not three persons in man, so neither are the last three persons in God. The first are the three essentials of one man while in the body; the second are the three essentials of one God in Christ.

It is true that God is represented as having a spirit before he became incarnate, and of working by it the same as he did afterwards; but it is also true that he is represented as dwelling in a human body before he became incarnate, and as working and revealing himself through it, the same as he did after the incarnation. He speaks of himself as performing his works through the different members of his body, the same as a man would speak, because he was speaking to men, and could not be understood by them in any other way. But by the spirit of God the Jews did not understand a distinct person of the Godhead, any more than they understood by the spirit of a man a distinct person of the man. And even if they had, it would then be a greater mystery than ever, why the Son is not also mentioned. If God and his spirit are distinctly named, and they had understood that by the spirit was meant the third person in the Trinity, where was the second person in the Trinity, and why is he not mentioned? Why should they speak so much about the spirit of God, and not a word about the Son of God? If the

Son was then in existence, and God was doing all things by him, why do not the Old Testament Scriptures say so? Why is it that they are not only silent upon this subject, but positively declare that God was working by his spirit, which the Trinitarian asserts is not the Son but an entirely different person? The very fact that the spirit of God is spoken of so frequently in the Old Testament, while there is not a word said about the Son of God, as then existing, is another very conclusive proof that we have taken the correct view of the subject, and that the view of the Trinitarian is not correct.

Again, it is thought that because God speaks of sending his spirit upon men, and because Christ promises the Holy Ghost, and calls it the "spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father," and, in another place, "the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name,"—that because they use such language, it is evidence that the Holy Ghost is a person distinct from them both. But so does Paul speak of sending his spirit to the Corinthians, when he was in fact at Philippi. He declares that though "absent in body," he is yet "present in spirit;" and in the same way do other men speak of themselves, both in the Bible and out of it. So does Christ declare that his Father in heaven sent him into the world, as though

his Father was far away from him, and yet he tells us that he is ever present with him and dwelleth in him. So we pray that God would *come down and bless us*, and that he would *send upon us his holy spirit*, when in fact God is always with us, and his spirit around and about us.

And, beside, when he does send his spirit, what is it but himself? What does the spirit bring to us but God? When we are filled with the spirit, what have we in our souls but the fullness of God? When it descends upon us, is God still far away, or is that which we receive so much of his divine nature? When it fell upon the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, was it not God that came among them? And when they went forth with joy unspeakable, performing miracles by the same spirit which dwelt in their Master, could not each one of them say with him, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." If the Father is God, and God is a spirit, can there be any other? Is not the Holy Ghost, when poured out upon us, only so much of God *in* us as we are able to contain? And if our souls had the capacity to receive a hundred-fold greater measure, would it not still be only a much larger portion of the same infinite nature of God?

It was not one spirit that dwelt in Christ, and

another in Paul, and still another in us; neither was it one person that worked in Christ, and another person that worked in his apostles; but one and the same spirit working in all. "There are diversities of gifts, but it is the same spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. . . . To one is given, by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same spirit; to another, faith, by the same spirit; to another, the gifts of healing, by the same spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits. . . . But all these worketh that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. . . . For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit."

Would to God that the whole of this beautiful chapter was understood by the church, and that the force of the truth which it contains was felt in all our hearts. We should then no longer dispute about the number of spirits or persons there are in one Deity, but should worship God "in spirit and in truth," as we have been commanded. We should

admit that as God is a spirit, the spirit is, therefore, God; and as he is declared to be one, he cannot be more than one. May that same spirit which rested upon the apostles, and which raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, abide with us forever; may it guide us into all truth, as it did them, and bring us finally to the same home in heaven.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

IN the foregoing pages our only aim has been to defend this great and important truth: "The Lord our God is one Lord." We have found this to be the uniform teaching of the Bible, and have endeavored to show that it means just what it states, and cannot possibly mean anything else. We have taken the position that, as God is declared to be one, he cannot be three; that three are not one, and one is not three, and that the doctrine of the Trinitarian is, therefore, contrary both to reason and to revelation.

The view of the subject which we have taken, then, is not a new one, but it is as old as the Word of God itself. We have not only deduced it from the Bible, but have adopted the very language of the Bible — have given it in the very words in which God himself has expressed it. We have found it to be one of the first and most important truths he

ever revealed to man, and one which he has always guarded with the utmost care, and which he has commanded his people to believe in every age. It was solemnly proclaimed by Moses, and was repeated in each subsequent age by all the other prophets, from Moses down to the time of Christ; and was taught by him and his apostles still more clearly, if possible, than it had been by the prophets.

Again, it is the doctrine which is set forth in what we call the "apostles' creed," and which is received as true in all the churches. It declares, as we have seen, that there is one God, and that he is the "Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth"; that Jesus Christ is "his only begotten Son our Lord"; and that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," etc. It does not teach that there are three persons in the Godhead, any more than does the Bible; neither does it state that the Son was begotten from eternity, but, on the contrary, it positively asserts that which we have all along endeavored to prove, namely, that he was born eighteen hundred years ago, of Mary. It sets forth the very doctrine which we believe to be true, because we find the same is taught by the inspired writers, and in almost precisely the same words.

But how is it with the doctrine of the Trinitarian?

Is it as old as the law of Moses? Did God teach it to Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob, or any of the prophets? Is the doctrine of the Trinity anywhere revealed in the Old Testament? Is it even stated in the New Testament, that there are three divine and eternal persons, and that these are one God? And if it is not; if God never taught it anywhere, where did it come from, and upon what authority does it rest?

If history is true, the doctrine of the Trinity was never taught, as the creed of the church, until nearly three hundred years after the volume of Revelation was closed. The Son of God had finished his labors upon earth, and had gone to his home in heaven; Paul had been beheaded at Rome; Thomas and Peter had suffered martyrdom in different and distant parts of the world; the other apostles were all dead; and John, the last of all, having received and published the revelation made to him on the island of Patmos, had passed from earth, and had joined his Saviour and brethren upon the other shore, more than two centuries before the Council of Nice was convened. The days of miracles were over, prophecy had ceased, the church had lost the spiritual power which it once possessed, and the darkness of the dark ages was rapidly approaching, when several hundred bishops were called together by the emperor Constantine, and

while in convention framed what is called the Nicene creed. The doctrine which was proclaimed in that council, together with the one which was afterward convened at Constantinople, has been the doctrine of Trinitarians ever since. It requires us to believe that which the church, as a church, had never taught before, and which not only contradicts the apostles' creed, but would also seem to contradict, at least, both the Bible and common sense. For, while the apostles' creed teaches that there is one God the Father, and that he is maker of heaven and earth; the Nicene creed teaches that beside him there are two others — God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. While the apostles' creed teaches that the Son of God was born of Mary, and that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost, the Nicene creed declares that he was begotten from eternity. It would follow from the teachings of the apostles' creed, as it does from the Bible, that the Holy Ghost was the Father of Christ; while it is taught by the Nicene, or Trinitarian creed, that he is not the Father, but another and entirely distinct person. The first teaches that God is one, and this we can readily believe, because it is in accordance with reason, and is also the language of the Bible. The other teaches that God is three, and this we cannot believe, because it is not in the Bible, and is, besides, a monstrous absurdity.

Then which of the two should the church accept — the apostles' creed, or the Trinitarian? The one is the doctrine which was taught by men who were inspired of God, and who were commissioned by him to teach the truth; the other was framed by men who were not inspired, and who were called together in a time of great excitement, and were influenced by all the prejudices and superstitions of the age in which they lived. The terms used in the apostles' creed are to be found in the Word of God; while in the Nicene creed, on the other hand, are introduced terms and phrases which are nowhere to be found in the Bible, and which God never warranted any man in using. That there are three persons in one Godhead, and that each one of these is supremely divine, is a doctrine without foundation in God's Word. It is neither expressed or implied; and, beside being unscriptural, is the plainest and most self-evident contradiction ever taught by the Christian church or any other.

We ask, again, then, why should we try to believe it? If we must dethrone our reason, and deny some of the plainest teachings of the Bible, in order to accept it, why not reject it at once and forever? If God did not see proper to state such a doctrine in his Word, why should we teach it in our creeds? If he has not said that it is true, what right have we to say

that it is? And, further, did the teaching of this doctrine ever result in any good? did the church take a higher stand, and become more pure and holy after the Council of Nice, or did it become more and more corrupt? Having received this new light, did it arise and shine, or did it become more superstitious, and teach still worse and more abominable heresies? Was there less dissension after these decisions than before, or did the darkness increase and become more universal? And even since the days of the Reformation, has there been peace and harmony, or has the church continued to be divided upon this same question? Has this doctrine given us clear and intelligible views of the Deity, or are we lost and bewildered in the very effort to comprehend it?

It has certainly never led any one to repentance, or to seek after a higher and holier life with God. Neither has it given us clearer views of the great work of God in Christ for man's salvation, but has perplexed and embarrassed all who have ever given it any attention. The more they have tried to study the character of God, with this view of the subject in their minds, the greater the confusion they have experienced, and the darker and more mysterious the whole thing has appeared. We have never yet met any one who claimed that he could understand the doctrine of the Trinity,

or who was not willing to admit that it appeared to be an absurdity.

Many sermons have been preached, and many books published to prove that there is in one God a trinity of persons, and yet these very men have acknowledged that they could not understand it, and that if they were to assert the same thing of any other being it would not be true. They have endeavored to show that with God one is three, and three are one, while, if they had declared this to be true of any other being in the universe, the world would have pronounced them insane. And yet, if this is true of the Deity, it is equally true of everything else. If one may be three in any case, it may as certainly be in every case; and if this is so, there is not a fact in history, or a principle in morals or a demonstration in Euclid, or anything else which we can rely upon as true.

The beginning of all things is God. Here is the first and great truth on which we all must stand, and from which we must reason. And if, at the very place where we begin our reasoning, we assert such an absurdity, we must assert the same to be true of everything that follows from it. If it is true of God, it must be true of all that he has caused to be; and as he is the cause of all things, it would therefore be universally true of all. If true of the fountain head, it must

be of all the streams that flow from it; and however sad and disastrous might be the consequences, we must be willing to admit them.

If we had written these pages to prove that three different men were only one man, would any one have believed us? If we had asserted that John and James and Andrew were the names of different and distinct persons, and that each one of them was by himself a man, and had then declared that they were all the same man, and that there was only one man in existence — would any one have believed it? And if a hundred others had labored to prove the same thing, would they have been regarded as sane men? Would it do for the world to act upon such a principle? Would it not destroy reason, ruin commerce, and subvert the foundation of all truth and honesty?

We are told that the Bible is higher and better authority than mathematics, and that we should believe it, if everything else is false. If it teaches, or seems to teach, that three are one, we should accept it, and here let the matter rest. Now, we respect any man who venerates the Word of God, and earnestly wish that all men loved it more. But we have too much respect and reverence for that sacred volume to admit that it *does teach* any such monstrous doctrine. The Author of that venerable book is the Author of our immortal

spirits; and he gave it, not to contradict the laws of our being, and to overthrow those innate principles of truth which he himself implanted within us, but that it might guide us in the way of peace and safety. He did not make man for the Bible, but *the Bible for man;* and he did not, therefore, give it to destroy his reason, but that it might direct and control it, and that it might impress upon him more clearly those laws and principles of truth which he had before written upon his mind and heart. The design of God, in giving us his Word was not to destroy the law which he had written upon our hearts, any more than it was the design of Christ to destroy the law and the prophets by his gospel. The object in both cases was not to destroy, but to fulfill. It was not to contradict, but to explain and enforce that which had already been given; and that God would therefore teach us in his Word, that which he had before taught was false, and which we cannot but think is false, even though all men should declare that it was true;—that God should do this is as impossible as that he should himself be false. As he cannot lie, so neither can he in one place teach that a certain thing is true, which he had plainly taught before was *not* true.

We have, therefore, made the above examination, in order that we might vindicate the character of

God by showing that he has not contradicted one of the first and most self-evident of all truths. In denying that there is in God a Trinity of persons, we have not denied a solitary passage in the Bible; and in saying we believe that God is one, we have only stated that which he has himself most clearly revealed. We believe that one is our Father, and that he was in Christ working for man's salvation, and that beside him there is no Saviour, because we have found it to be his own solemn testimony, made, not in a few, but in scores, and, we might almost say, in *hundreds* of places. There is certainly no other truth in the Bible which has been taught more clearly, or which has been repeated more frequently. We think it is stated in more places that God is our Father and our Redeemer, and that beside him there is no other, than is any other truth which has ever been revealed to man. We know there are others which are many times repeated; but certainly none, we think, which have been stated in so many different places, and by so many different writers. We know, too, that every important truth in the Bible has been revealed to us very clearly, and that God does not require us to believe what he has not revealed; and, for this very reason, we do not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is now under-

stood and explained. We are under no obligation to believe it, because God has never taught it. We have no right to assume, even, that there are three persons, and that each one of these is Deity; but we *have* a right, and it is *our duty*, to reject such a doctrine, because God has most solemnly declared that there is but one. He has never said that there are three, and until the mathematician can show that one is three, we should let the matter rest right where God has placed it. We should admit the revelation of God in his Son, because the Bible teaches it; but we should not insist that the Deity in Christ was only one person in the Godhead, and that the Son, in whom he dwelt, was another person of the Godhead, and then try to explain how each one of these can be supremely divine, and there yet be only one Supreme Being. We should not say that God the Father is one Deity, and that the man through whom he was revealed is another Deity, and then undertake to prove that the two are absolutely but one. That which is the Deity in Christ we should call God, and that which is the humanity we should call man. But we should not make the man God, and then, because this gives us a plurality, endeavor to reconcile it with the Bible doctrine of God's unity. Let us admit that which is written, but let us not

undertake to teach that which is not written. By first assuming that which is unreasonable, and which is contrary to the Word of God, we are compelled to turn around and deny that it is contrary to his Word. And hence we assert, with a bold face, that though God declares he is one, he is, nevertheless, three, and that this is no contradiction whatever.

For fifteen hundred long years the church has taught a doctrine which is nowhere found in the Bible, and against which the reason of man has revolted ever since. Her ablest men have all the time acknowledged that it was the greatest of mysteries, and that it even seemed to be untrue; and though they have tried to illustrate and explain it in every possible way, the result is that, to-day, it is involved in greater mystery, and is considered even more unreasonable, than it was the day it was first proclaimed. Every effort that has been made to throw new light upon it, either from reason or revelation, has only tended to increase the darkness in which it was enveloped, and to cause the inquiring mind to be less satisfied and contented. And if the church should continue to teach it for fifteen more centuries, the reason of man would continue to assert that it was not true. There never was a man yet who could understand it; and so long as we have the power to think, and can distinguish between that which is self-evi-

dently true, and that which is necessarily false; there never will be a man who can accept the doctrine of a Trinity of persons, without admitting in his heart a Trinity of Gods.

We cannot close without acknowledging our gratitude to God for directing us into what we conceive to be the truth, on so grave and important a subject. And we also feel constrained to add, that we have here stated that which we believe with all our heart, and which we have felt to be true in the deepest and profoundest recesses of the soul. Since the day when God first revealed in us his Son, and called us by his grace to teach his truth, we have never felt that we were more conscientiously in the discharge of duty, and that what we were doing had met more fully with his divine approbation, than we have felt in the prosecution of this work. And if we have uttered a sentence which is untrue, or have in a single instance misapplied, or put a wrong construction upon his Sacred Word, we trust that in his infinite mercy he will forgive.

May that God who spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, and who has always guided his people, notwithstanding their sins and transgressions, continue with them forever; and may we all be led to him who is our life, that when he shall appear, we may also appear with him in glory.

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